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ABSTRACT

Collected in this volume are the papers presented at the 1978 Chief State School Officers Summer Institute. The program was devoted to political issues in education and focused on a number of current educational problems. Political issues were discussed in relation to a number of areas, including federal education priorities, federal-state relations, the education-state government relationship, local control of education, school finance reform, competency testing, vocational and career education, bilingual and bicultural education, teacher education and certification, past and future trends, and curriculum reform. Each issue was examined in the light of four interrelated questions: What actors are involved in the decisions? What ends do they seek and how? What reallocations of power, financial support, or other resources will have to be made to satisfy varied interests? and What action-alternatives are open to state school officers? Presentations were made by noted scholars and practitioners. (Author/JM)

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POLITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

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POLITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

A Report of the
1978 Chief State School Officers
Summer Institute

Edited by
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Foreword

Every year since its inception in 1970, The Chief State School Officers Summer Institute has focused its attention on some pervasive and significant educational issue. Over the years, as discussion centered on a current topic, one persistent question kept arising: "What are the political considerations of this issue?"

This year, therefore, the Council officers chose to devote the entire Institute program to an examination of some of the political issues in education, selecting a number of current educational problems for analysis of their political implications. Each issue was examined in the light of four interrelated questions:

1. What actors are involved in the decisions that must be made?
2. What ends do they seek, and how do they propose to reach these ends?
3. What reallocations of power, financial support, or other resources will have to be made to satisfy the varied interests?
4. What action-alternatives are open to chief state school officers?

To bring expert knowledge and fresh insight to bear on these issues, an outstanding group of scholars and practitioners was assembled to serve as Institute faculty. Their presentations, contained in the following pages, provide the body of this Institute report.

As in previous Institute sessions, the major presentations were buttressed and illuminated by the lively participation of the Chiefs themselves. The panels, the question-and-answer sessions, and the informal discussions with the speakers constituted a significant part of the meetings, too voluminous and complex to be reported in print.

The papers presented below, though not a complete report of the Institute, will give the reader a sense of the liveliness and timeliness of the issues addressed, and provide an overview of current political issues in education.

Kenneth H. Hansen
Institute Director

Chapter I

Political Issues in Establishing National Education Priorities

(Federal Policymaking in Education:
19 Propositions and 5 Proposals)

by
Samuel Halperin
Director, Institute for Educational Leadership
George Washington University

Americans have *always* had a love-hate relationship with Washington. George Wallace-ism. Nixon's "New Federalism." Jimmy Carter, the anti-establishment candidate. Shock waves from Proposition 13. These are only a few of the manifestations of America's uneasy encounter with the realities of Big Government and its sloganeered accompaniments: Deficit spending, Galloping Legislative and Judicial Interventionism, Creeping Bureaucracy, and the like.

Or, instead of slogans, we tell jokes:

—Like the definition of Washington as "a stimulating and beautiful city, surrounded on all four sides by reality."

—Like the puzzlement of two ladies from the Middle West who were observing for the first time the antics of our U.S. House of Representatives. When the voting bells went off, and Members and pages scurried in every direction, one visiting lady turned to the other with alarm in her voice and queried: "What's happening?" Her friend replied, with equal alarm, "I don't know, but I think one of them must have gotten lose!"

—Like the chief state school officer who died and went to Hell. One day he was communicating with another chief still among the living. The survivor asked his departed friend what Hell was really like and received this answer: "Well, first of all, down here we've got *two* U.S. Offices of Education."

Let me list some propositions about federal policymaking in education and offer some modest prescriptions for improving our current policymaking apparatus.

The Educational Arena

To understand educational policymaking in Washington—or in the states, for that matter—we need to start with a frank recognition of some of the salient features of the contemporary American educational arena.[1]

1. **Numerous Participants**—The domain of education is occupied by thousands of agencies, organizations and groups whose diverse needs and views must be taken into account. The sheer number of involved participants makes it exceedingly difficult to carry on rational dialogue, to select effective means of mobilizing public support, to anticipate demands, and to estimate, even approximately, the consequences of public policies, decisions, and programs.

2. **Decentralized Decisionmaking**—The long-standing decentralization of authority and responsibility that characterizes the educational system in the U.S.—from many points of view, one of its most cherished features—increasingly aggravates two lines of competition and conflict: (a) among lay persons and professionals within the tradition of local control through elected boards; and (b) among levels of government—state, local, and national. Both lines are subject to shifting balances of power and influence among the two sets of potential opponents and are crucially interrelated around such questions as: Who should take what responsibilities? For what quality of educational service? Rendered to whom? Tension is further exacerbated by new claims to legitimacy, for example, for "community control" and "parental involvement."

3. **Factionalism, Fragmentation, Conflicting Goals**—When the increasing number of active participants and the struggle for control are combined with the effects of societal complexity, pluralism, and highly specialized roles and functions, destabilizing historical trends are greatly intensified. Among the most notable of these trends are: the presence of strong factionalism in educational policy and policymaking; the difficulty of coordinating educational purposes and resources in a highly fragmented delivery system; and the unexpected and unintended impact of major events and unrelated decisions on educational goals and achievements. These "uncaused" and accidental events and resulting conditions severely complicate the difficult tasks of ensuring accountability and forecasting the results of policies and programs.

4. **Difficult to Improve**—Partisan conflict, distrust among leaders and groups, poor or nonexistent communication among key participants, opposition among apparently equally qualified experts, and jurisdictional competition each test, shape and complicate policymaking processes and procedures. Essentially the same factors that make effective policymaking difficult also stand in the way of efforts to achieve improvements.

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[1] Richard C. Snyder, Director of the Mershon Center, Ohio State University, expounded these points as part of a policy formulation process for the Institute for Educational Leadership.

5. No National Education Policy and No Agency Responsible for Performance of Education Policymaking—The net result of the foregoing considerations is that (1) there is no coherent, widely shared, or clearly understood "national policy" for supporting and strengthening the abstraction called "the nation's educational system"; and (2) no institution, agency or group of organizations has accepted responsibility for, or involved itself in, creating better public understanding of the policymaking process or for improving both educational policymaking and its problem-solving structures and processes. Needless to say, the lack of agreed "national policy" does *not* imply the desirability of a closed ideology or a single, overarching plan. What is missing, however, is a national strategy for strengthening policymaking in education.

Propositions about Federal Policy Making

Depending on who does the counting, there are at least 500 distinct federal education and education-related programs,[2] administered by at least 70 different executive departments and agencies. These programs together account for over $23 billion in the current federal budget.

1. *The federal government's numerous involvements with education are seldom justified as aid to improve education,* per se. *Rather, the "Feds" utilize educational institutions as instruments to pursue more specific goals.* Some of the chief of these, as measured in dollars: to help military veterans readjust to civilian life, to advance scientific research and development (most often in specified, applied areas), to combat poverty and unemployment, to train skilled workers for a technological society and, thereby, to strengthen national defense, to improve the nation's health through training of health professionals, etc.

In other words, "education" may be the mode of delivery but it is not the major organizing concept for, or the primary intended beneficiary of, federal programs. Only when we realize this central fact can we understand why so much damage is done, mostly inadvertently, to educational institutions and practices by so many education-related programs of the federal government.

2. *Many of the federal government's deepest impacts on education result from policies enacted by non-education Congressional committees and their implementing bureaucracies in the Executive Branch.*

The best current example of this activity is tax credits for payment of educational expenses, whose implications for education are vast and uncharted. This legislation is considered by most Members of Congress as a tax measure, or more specifically, as tax relief for the hard-pressed middle class. The bill is handled by the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on Ways and Means, with the House and Senate education committees having only marginal input.

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[2] One Library of Congress study lists 439 separate statutory authorities affecting *postsecondary* education alone. See Robert C. Andringa, "The View from the Hill," *Change*, April 1976.

This instance is hardly the first time that Congressional tax committees have dealt with major education-related issues. We already have tax credits for preschool and child care expenses, charitable deductions for contributions to education, restrictions on foundation giving, parental exemptions for dependent students, deductibility of selected educational and training costs, various ways to treat income from fellowships and scholarships, and a host of other tax/education policies.

Similarly, the recent act prohibiting mandatory retirement prior to age 70[3] can have far-reaching consequences for educational institutions and their tenure systems. But this act was considered as a labor and anti-discrimination measure without a full range of input from educators, administrators and faculty.

Additional "non-education" policy areas could also be cited, each with a profound influence on educational costs and/or educational practices: energy, social security taxes, regulation of pension plans, equal employment opportunity, occupational safety and health, and so on.

Even the current bills to create a cabinet-level Department of Education are being considered by Congressional committees on organization and operations with only peripheral commentary by those Members with genuine expertise in education.

3. *Most federal programs arise from external social forces, rather than from the primary efforts of educators.* Thus, World War I created a response in the Smith-Hughes vocational education act; massive demobilization after World War II led to the GI bills; Sputnik sparked the National Defense Education Act; the War on Poverty and the civil rights revolution fueled Head Start and, a year later, Title I of ESEA; persistent unemployment contributed to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act, and so on.

Here and there, educators managed to catch hold of one of these waves of massive social change and were able to graft on programs of more generalized educational significance. For example, ESEA Title I and the social and political forces that brought it into being also carried along ESEA's old Title V, to strengthen state departments of education, Title III, for innovative supplementary centers and services, Title II, for improving school libraries and instructional materials. Similarly, the War on Poverty's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 provided the locomotive power for enacting such long-stymied educational programs as Adult Basic Education and College Work-Study.

4. Far from having been the principal architects and expediters of major federal education programs, *America's educators generally failed to an-*

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[3] P.L. 95-256, "Age Discrimination in Employment Act Amendments of 1978," April 6, 1978.

ticipate and to advocate solutions for the problems underlying the major upheavals of our time. Thus, the War on Poverty, the civil rights revolution of Blacks, other minorities and women, the far-reaching P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 statutes relating to handicapped persons, the new struggles over age discrimination—and many others—saw most educators in a reactive, rather than proactive, role. Even worse, their lack of involvement and their often hesitant and tardy entry into the fray caused many of the plaintiff groups to identify in educators and education "the enemy" they were seeking to defeat. As a result, in too many areas of our society today, educators—especially, educational administrators—are seen as culpable—by minorities of all types, by the disabled and handicapped, by feminists, by civil rights activists, by the poor and unemployed, by child development and day-care advocates,[4] and by a significant portion of students of all ages, parents, and taxpayers at large.

5. One important corollary of this proposition is that educators in Washington often stand alone when we desperately need allies. Except for the superb lobbying skills and political brawn of the AFL-CIO, which has long been education's single most effective advocate, *education lacks dependable external support.*

6. Federal involvement in education, as stated earlier, has been justified in a number of *instrumental* ways, hardly ever as an end in itself. Similarly, *the roles taken by the "Feds" in their involvement with education vary greatly over time.* Consider these distinct possibilities:

- *The Stimulative Role,* whereby federal categorical aid is used as an incentive to get people to do something that the "Feds" consider desirable. This role includes "framing the issues," that is, presenting problems in a particular way (with or without accompanying dollars) so that other policymakers and the public at large gradually come to view them through that frame or lens. As examples, Head Start catalyzed a basic change in the way we have come to think about early childhood development, while Title I and related programs popularized and then institutionalized, in extremely short order, the newly emergent concept of compensatory education.
- *Research and Development,* i.e., the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge or improved practice.
- *Service and Technical Assistance,* using federal staff to help state and local educational units. This also includes the training of educational personnel and leadership.
- *Moral Leadership,* attempting to alter or establish priorities and communicating ideas through Washington's "Bully Pulpit." (For example, exhortations for Vocational Education and Right to Read.)

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[4] Some of the anti-educator remarks overheard when the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs voted to delete Head Start from the proposed department of education are a recent case in point.

- *General Aid or Support of Operating Costs,* a role long discussed, with the federal share of the elementary-secondary educational bill usually targeted at one-third. There are, of course, major federal programs originally enacted as stimulative or "demonstration" measures which now provide substantial operating or "service" funds in large categorical areas, e.g. Title I, handicapped and vocational education. But, aside from the impacted areas programs, there is no unrestricted broad-gauge federal aid in elementary-secondary education.

A different case, in postsecondary education, is the multi-billion dollar, need-based student financial assistance programs. In policymaker parlance, Washington has placed its bets on the ponies (students) instead of on the tracks (institutions). Students and their parents (all of whom, incidentally, can vote) are afforded a measure of freedom in their choice of colleges and universities. Indirectly, through the marketplace mechanism, federal dollars are allowed to flow into the general revenues of thousands of public, private, nonprofit and proprietary institutions. It is precisely this analogy, now being vigorously urged for grades K-12, that currently enjoys immense political appeal, not the traditional exhortations to enactment of general federal aid to education.

- *The Regulatory role,* which was not supposed to happen, which few really wanted to happen, but which, notwithstanding, has happened.

From time to time, Washington changes its signals. Instead of playing the role of great innovator and stimulator, as was the case in the mid-1960s, Washington has increasingly seen itself as a selective funder of programs to aid the poor and the disadvantaged. Title I of ESEA, need-based student financial assistance in higher education and, recently, aid for the handicapped have become the three multi-billion dollar "Equality of Access" pillars on which most of the education agenda has been built.

Increasingly, however, with accompanying dollars to ease the pain—or without such emolient aid—Washington has assumed an increasingly regulatory, standard-setting role. Executive bureaucrats and Congressmen, too, have combined to produce laws and regulations that are even more demanding and prescriptive.

This shifting emphasis—which I do not regard as in any way completed—is elaborated by several other propositions:

7. Legislators are heavily attracted by the challenge of legislating, of putting one's personal stamp on the lives of 220 million Americans, of "making it" in one of the greatest macho games of our time—authoring one's own bill. In simpler words, most legislators today believe their job is to legislate. But, as recently as 1960, a very large percentage of the Members saw their legislative role as primarily a conservative one: stopping new social programs from being born, and protecting dominant interests from being undermined by the enactment of new legislation favorable to challenger groups. Legislative restraint and the negative pro-

tection afforded by lazy legislators have vanished along with the Eisenhower-era image of sleepy town Washington slumbering along the banks of the Potomac.

8. Legislative activism can also be ascribed to the rapid pace of judicial activism. *Brown, Lau, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children,* and a host of lesser-known court cases have each called forth one or more responses, thus adding volume to normal legislative appetites.

9. And then there is the activism spawned by the Executive Branch's seemingly insatiable need to "have a program," to "do something new." Unlike some other departments of government in which the leadership sees its role largely in managerial terms, HEW's leaders have, predominantly, been cut from an activist mold. Would-be appointees have not been selected primarily for their ability to make sense out of the 130 or so disparate programs in HEW's Education Division and to assure the Congress and the taxpayers that these programs are working reasonably well. Rather, the name of the game seems to be: what dramatic action can the new appointee take to get influential people talking about his new initiatives, to use his transient average of less than two years in office in order to "make wave," to get noticed for selection to the next rung of national achievement.

10. Finally, there is the activism spurred on by a myriad of some 500 education interest groups. These associations, proliferating at the rate of one or more per week, seek to get "closer to the action" that affects them and to show their constituents back home that they are "doing something." The quickest way to do this is to design an amendment, mandate a certain action, tinker with an old formula, or even introduce an entirely new concept for legislative intervention. Since Members of Congress are eager to please, few Members today would risk constituent ire by telling a supplicant "that's a damn fool notion and we don't need any more laws!" Lobbyists soon learn that there is a sponsor for *any* idea and a reasonably good chance to secure enactment if that idea isn't too costly, doesn't do much damage to other interests, and provides its potential sponsor with speaking honoraria, favorable publicity and the other appurtenances of democratic, elective government.

11. Not only is "policy" fractionated in the Congress and in the various mission-oriented executive agencies, but *there is no one in the federal city who looks out for the totality of education. Worse yet, few policymakers of consequence worry about education very much at all.*

The U.S. Commissioner of Education, responsible for some $13 billion in federal programs (about half the total appropriated for education and for programs which, in the language of the U.S. Budget are "beneficial to the interests of education, but which are not primarily educational in purpose"), is at the lowest grade of the federal executive scale. As such, he has no clout with assistant secretaries, under secretaries or secretaries in other executive agencies, many of whom are responsible for millions and even billions of dollars of federal programs with highly significant consequences for American education. Whatever his personal characteristics may be, the Commissioner is today a minor-league figure in Washington policymaking.

Secretaries of HEW are enormously busy and harried creatures, dashing from welfare scandals to the dangers of food additives, from containment of hospital costs to the desegregation of colleges, from Head Start and day care to feeding centers for senior citizens, from cigarettes and cancer to fraud and abuse in the social security system. While some secretaries have substantial interest in education, others do not. While some secretaries try to master the complexity of educational programs, most leave their power in the hands of little-known, relatively unaccountable special assistance whose influence generally far exceeds that of the Assistant Secretary for Education and the Commissioner of Education.

Inter-executive branch coordination is marked by its absence. The Federal Interagency Committee on Education, established by executive order in 1965, does useful technical work but has no authority and little credibility.

Fractionalization also characterizes the Office of Management and Budget, whose charter is certainly clear enough to support interagency coordination but whose relatively small staff is organized along traditional and parochial lines—e.g. health, education, manpower, defense, veterans, etc. A particularly gross example of this parochialism: the OMB examiner for vocational and adult education is not even in the same organizational unit as the OMB examiner for CETA and manpower and training programs; even conversation, let alone coordination, is accidental, not planned.

Not since 1968 has any single individual or group of individuals served as White House advisor or focal point for education. Individuals on the Nixon Domestic Council or Carter Domestic Policy Staff who concern themselves with education do so only intermittently, have little clout, and turn over with unsettling frequency. Often their very identity is one of Washington's few well-kept secrets.

And, finally, presidents devote exceedingly little time to education. One of Mr. Nixon's education aides estimates that the President spent no more than 20 hours on education issues during his entire tenure, and at least half of that dealt with crises in desegregation and with campus unrest. Currently, by Mr. Carter's own admission, education "is a subject that rarely arises at a Cabinet meeting . . . in Washington. The only time it does arise is when there is a legal question involving civil rights or the allocation of funds. . . . (Education) doesn't have the visibility and importance that it warrants in our democratic and free society."

12. Not only is education policy shaped in a host of fractionated settings, but *the principal policymakers tend to rotate with increasing frequency. As a result, "institutional memory" varies from the weak to the nonexistent.* During the 17 years from John F. Kennedy's inauguration to today, there have been 9 Secretaries of HEW and 15 Commissioners (and long-term acting Commissioners) of Education.

For the better part of this same period, continuity characterized the Congress. Incumbent Members who desired to do so could easily return to Congress and continue to build up seniority and expertise in education. But all of that has changed as well. Of the 535 Members of Congress, 377 (fully 70 percent) were not in office when the Elementary and Secondary Education Act became law in 1965. Next year, at least 60-80 Members will not return, most through voluntary retirements. More important, of the 37 current Members of the House Committee on Education and Labor, only ten were serving in 1965—and two of these have announced their retirement at the end of this year.

13. The corollary of this picture of extreme discontinuity is the simple proposition that *power and influence gravitate to the survivors.* No one in Washington exercises greater clout over federal education policy than Carl D. Perkins, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, who, over 30 years—four years more than the total life of HEW—has accumulated substantive and parliamentary expertise, political I.O.U.s, and immense credibility as a man who both cares deeply about education and who hardly ever loses an educational struggle. Much the same can be said for several of his House colleagues, particularly Democrats John Brademas, William Ford and Frank Thompson and retiring Republican Albert Quie. To these may be added a bipartisan handful of Senators on the authorizing committee—especially Claiborne Pell and Jacob Javits—and another handful on the two appropriations committees—Warren Magnuson, Daniel Flood, Dave Obey, Robert Michel—deserve special mention.

Then there are the key Congressional staffers—no more than ten—whose praises may be unsung in Boise and Boston, but whose effectiveness has won them a mixture of respect, admiration and even fear in various parts of Washington's educational establishment.

Similarly, in the bureaucracy, veterans and survivors wield impressive influence, if generally on a narrower canvas than their Capitol Hill staff counterparts.

14. *Education policies now tend to be hammered out in relatively popular and nonpartisan fashion,* as contrasted with only a decade ago when Democratic-Republican splits were commonplace. Today, major educational authorization bills register votes similar to the 87-7 (Senate) and 404-7 (House) tallies that were accorded P.L. 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act. One current example: the unprecedentedly large, $51 *billion*-plus, reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (H.R. 15) which passed the House of Representatives on July 13, 1978, by the vote of 350-20. Even the GOP substitute bill offered by Rep. John Ashbrook, which called for the traditional Republican educational prescription of block grants, was defeated by a vote of 290-79, with 61 Republicans voting against the proposal and 61 voting for it.

One offshoot of this relative decline in partisanship is that legislators and interest groups are encouraged to a more activist stance. When they know that legislative accomplishment is relatively easy in education, as contrasted with the enormous difficulty of enacting, say, energy legislation, they tend to legislate all the more.

While party designation may not be a wholly reliable predictor of Congressional behavior on educational issues, several related propositions may help to differentiate Democratic from Republican executive administrations. In general, GOP ascendancy—as noted in the Eisenhower, Nixon and Ford terms—signals a low level of educational activity, ranging from "benign neglect" to an active hostility to federal involvement in education. Nixon's "New Federalism" was marked by numerous acrimonious encounters among the White House, the Congress and the educational community as the first sought to hold down the level of educational spending, to terminate numerous Congressionally-mandated programs and, through general and special revenue sharing, to reduce Washington's "Bully Pulpit" role in educational affairs.

Further, Republican Administration policy can be characterized as "Top Down," flowing from strongly held ideological views about the quite limited nature of federal responsibility. Key individuals like Assistant to the President John Ehrlichman and OMB Director (later HEW Secretary) Caspar ("The Knife") Weinberger were the key shapers of policy toward education in the Nixon years.

In Democratic White Houses, on the other hand, rampant activism and much fuzzier ideological preferences dominate the educational agenda. President Kennedy accorded educational legislation an extremely high priority, but died with almost his entire 24-part program either defeated or in limbo. LBJ's legislative activism is, by now, almost legendary. President Carter, in his second year, has presented a budget[5] and a legislative program exceeding in scale anything Washington has seen since the mid-Sixties.[5]

In contrast to the Republican "Top Down" policy emphasis, Democrats seem to operate more nearly from a "Middle Up" policy base. Under JFK and LBJ, education commissioners Francis Keppel and Harold Howe, Assistant Secretary for Legislation Wilbur Cohen, and their immediate staffs in HEW were the most influential shapers of policy. Neither the White House nor the bureaucracy were particularly seminal in formulating the Democrats' abundant programs.

Today, the locus of influence in the "Middle Up" policy strata are the 3Ms—Mike O'Keefe, Mike Smith, Mike Timpane. O'Keefe, HEW's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation/Education; Smith, USOE's Assistant Commissioner for Policy Studies; and, to a lesser extent, Timpane, NIE's Deputy Director, are widely regarded as the major shapers of Executive Branch educational strategy. There are, on occasion, other key actors, especially Benjamin Heineman, Jr., Executive Assistant to Secretary Califano, and HEW Under Secretary Hale Champion. Close observers of the 1977-78 legislative formulation cycle report that their involvement was critical.

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[5] A fourteen percent increase over the previous year and some $2 billion higher than President Ford's last budget. (But wait until Fiscal Year 1980!—S.H.)

15. The key propositions, however, are that *Democratic Administration policymaking tends to cluster at lower levels of the Executive Branch than under the Republicans.*

16. *And regardless of location, this policymaking in education tends to be far more vigorous/activist under the Democrats.*

17. *The role of research and evaluation in the shaping of legislative and other public policy is extremely limited.* Not that all decisions are "strictly political" or "irrational," as the man on the street apparently believes. But we do know—from the work of journalists, political scientists and other trained observers—that policymakers' personal views and those of their respected and trusted friends, impact of the media and assumptions about the economy, count for much more than systematic processes of inquiry. Indeed, one highly regarded student of the Congress, in a weighted list of eleven variables affecting national legislation,[6] listed information from Congressional hearings as seventh down the list; General Accounting Office reports and other independent assessments as number eight; policy research studies and reports as number nine; program evaluation studies as number eleven.

18. *Policymaking is incremental and essentially conservative.* Elected policymakers are loathe to harm existing arrangements or to reduce existing benefits. Executive bureaucrats, too, are seldom willing to contemplate a world *de novo,* in which everything starts "from scratch." Despite PPBS, MBO, ZBB and other tools for more orderly decisionmaking, the best single predictor of tomorrow's policy is likely to be found in what is happening today. Executive branch budget recommendations tend to be approved by the Congress in some 90 percent of the cases. Deviations are more likely to be on the upside in the case of existing programs and on the downside in the case of Administration pet projects and assorted "new initiatives."

19. When all is said and done, *educational policymaking in Washington is mostly concerned with dollars, not with pedagogical and philosophical concepts centered on teaching and learning.* While much of the decisionmaking process is enveloped in arguments over what is "effective education," *Washington's primary educational activity is to allocate resources to some beneficiaries while, by indirection, denying them to others.*

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[6] Robert C. Andringa, "Eleven Factors Influencing Federal Education Legislation." See, also, Thomas R. Wolanin, "Congress, Information and Policymaking for Postsecondary Education: 'Don't Trouble Me with the Facts' "; both in the Institute for Educational Leadership's *Federalism at the Crossroads: Improving Educational Policymaking* (Washington, 1976), pages 79-98.

This is not intended to dismiss the Washington policymaking process as merely a thinly disguised struggle over who pays and who benefits—although that is not an inaccurate so much as an incomplete description. There *are* deeply held values which help to explain much of Congressional and Executive Branch behavior. Equity and access, for example, are genuine concerns of numerous policymakers in the Federal City. And their concerns go to the very heart of the process by which dollars (and related benefits) are ultimately distributed. Equity in employment, equity in access to public information, fair procedures for notification, rulemaking, accountability, and the like, are all dimensions of that process.

In short, if dollars are the name of the game, one must still master the highly complex rules and the variety of arenas in which that game is played.

Prescriptions for Improvement

What *evaluation* does one place on all of the foregoing description and analysis—assuming that you accept it as a fairly accurate representation of reality in Washington? Undoubtedly, many will be appalled by this "gigantic mess." Some will see in it horrible examples of ignorance, incompetence and even evil. Perhaps most frightening of all, as David S. Broder suggested in a recent column (*Washington Post,* July 19, 1978), is the picture of policymaking out of control: ". . . people are prepared to deal with malevolence; they're not prepared to deal with the idea that no one is in charge."

Extreme fears are unwarranted. What has been described is not necessarily "bad" if one believes that messiness accompanies diversity and ultimately protects democratic freedom. If one does not want an overarching federal presence in education or a truly "efficient delivery system" in Washington, perhaps there is virtue in what I have described as a kind of permanent disarray in our policymaking apparatus.

Yet, we can, and ought to, try to tidy up as much of the mess as possible without sacrificing the benefits of diversity that survive and thrive in the interstices of the federal policymaking complex. Herewith, then, a few modest prescriptions for improvement:

1. A Cabinet-Level Department of Education—This legislation could well become law in 1978. While most of the rhetoric advocating such a department is overblown, and expectations in many quarters are unreasonably high, I believe that a department could accomplish the following:

- elevate the status of education within the federal bureaucratic establishment and improve education's bargaining power with OMB and other federal agencies;

- provide a full-time, high-level staff in the leadership of the department, who will be concerned exclusively with educational issues instead of a hundred other diversions;

- lead to a gradual realignment of education decisionmaking centers, particularly through reshuffling of Congressional committee jurisdictions, Office of Management and Budget examining units, and the like;

- reduce the number of separate policymaking centers for education and lead to a reduction in the number of key participants who shape education decisions in the Executive Branch;

- assist in the coordination of a federal educational policy within the Executive Branch by establishing a focal point and an advocate for education's primary interests.

2. A Unified State Front—Only recently, Washington has become aware that the concept of "state" is not synonomous with chief state school officer. Indeed, intergovernmental relations is the Federal City's new "in" concept. Each Executive Branch agency is now required to designate a significant officer to act as liaison with governors, counties, cities, legislatures, and other governmental units. Increasingly, Washington policymakers are inquiring whether recommendations presented to them are supported by all parts of the state policymaking community. More pointedly, they are asking not to be placed in a conflict situation with education asking for one policy while governors or legislatures pursue quite another.

The recent attempts of the organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers to forge common policy and to coordinate representation to the Congress and to the Executive Branch should be encouraged. As limited resources come under increasing pressure, policymakers will be more inclined to support policies which are promoted by political-educational combines, rather than by what they regard as the "special pleadings" of educators alone.

3. Coalitions with Non-Educational Groups—It follows from what I have argued earlier that we in education need to end our relative isolation from many of the major social forces and interest groups in the nation. While opinions will differ as to whom education ought to align with, educators cannot go it alone without the mutually reinforcing support of other professionals in human resources, in the civil rights movement, and among the various portions of society which see in education a key to their struggle for social betterment. It will not be sufficient for the Council of Chief State School Officers and the 500 other national educational associations and offices simply to improve the quality of their lobbying. For, in today's educational proliferation, there is an inherent cancellingout process which must further isolate and weaken the claims of education on other segments of the society.

As several keen observers of our society have noted, consensus has broken down in our country at many points.[7] But if America is to survive as a viable and decent society, a new social consensus must be forged. Such a consensus, however, is not possible, without morally conscious and politically astute educational leadership at its very core.

4. Making the Hard Choices—In the severe resources crunch which is now so widely predicted, educators will need to make tough choices about what kinds of federal assistance are essential, and they will also need to do something new: vigorously oppose other educational expenditures to which they accord lower priority.

Too often, educators avert their eyes from other people's demands for resources, even when they do not agree with such demands. A moment's serious reflection would tell them that each new commitment to spend reduces the amount of funds which can be made available to their own priority needs. Yet, the fact is that educators seldom oppose the spending schemes of other educators. Federal policymakers, consequently, complain that *they* have to make the unpopular choices because they do not have a prestigious organization lending credence to their view that some programs must obviously deserve higher priorities than others. If, coming education budgets are likely to present difficult choices at the federal level, would it not be better for you to work vigorously to help concentrate limited resources in a relatively few federal programs whose objectives you support, rather than to see them spread over 150 or more separate line items? Obviously, you ought not to wait until "They" do it to you. Rather, you should ask for resources, in the areas that you believe are most warranted, while you resist the "gift" of lower priority spending.

5. Self-Regulation and Pre-Emption—All of this analysis leads to old and rather unstartling advice, yet counsel which is valid when you are dealing with the Feds. To the extent that you are able to solve your own problems and to meet the demands of those groups in society which feel disinherited and under-represented, to the extent that you can eliminate abuse in the administration of federal programs, to the extent that you are able to sense emerging issues and to deal with them forcefully and effectively on your own, it should be apparent that you will be forestalling and pre-empting federal initiatives, and accompanying onerous federal regulations.

Virtually all students of political science and economics who have observed Washington's behavior since the turn of the century agree that the

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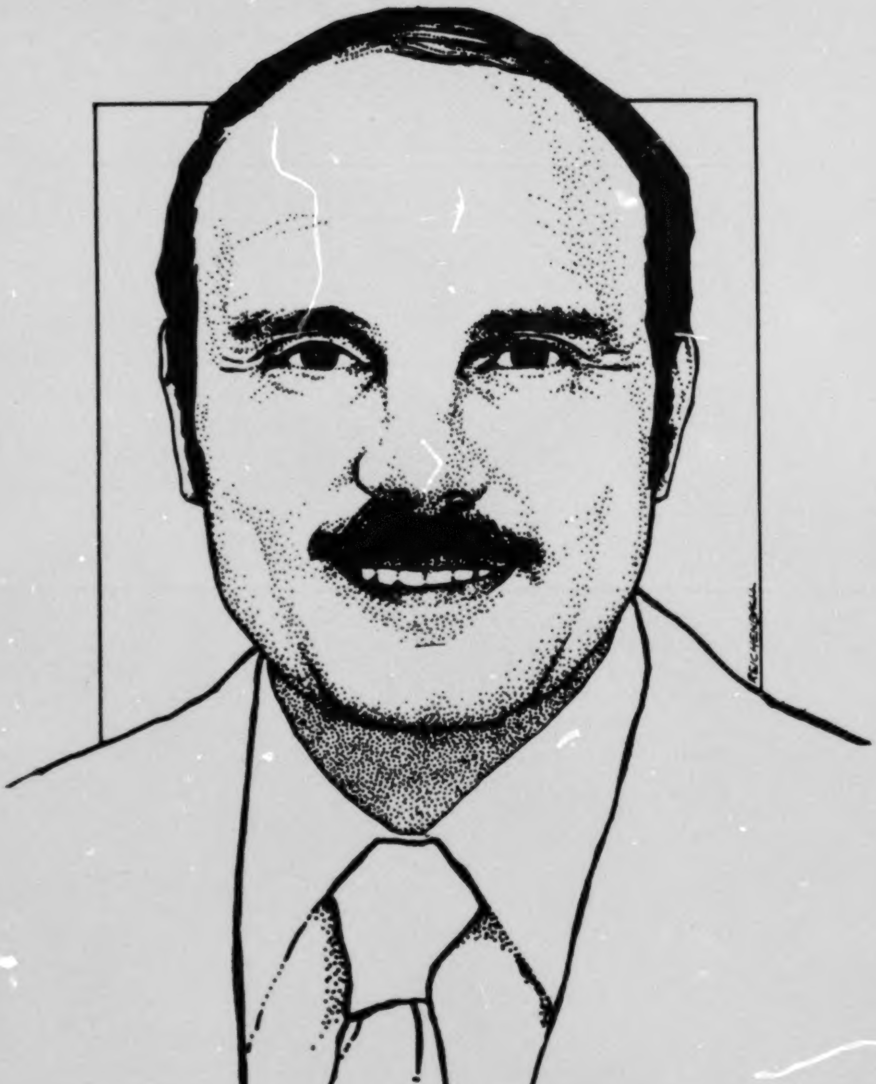
[7] See David Broder, *op.cit.*, and Kevin Phillips, "The Balkanization of America," *Harper's*, May 1978.

Federal Government does not lightly enter upon new areas for regulation and control. Education, itself, is the classic example of federal involvement long deferred. Thus, there is both hope and precedent for believing that the federal role can be transformed into a limited and healthy and supportive role to the extent that each of you—and your other colleagues in the states—meets your own responsibilities with timeliness, with foresight, and with courage.



Chapter II

Political Issues in Federal-State Relations

by

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Although many countries have established nationally regulated public school systems, the United States has always emphasized state and local control of education—leaving most questions of what and how children are taught to the discretion of fifty states and 16,000 local school districts.

During the last two decades, however, policy-setting power in American public education has become increasingly centralized—the result of a new emphasis on civil liberties, including integration and reforms of school financing, and procedures of accountability, all of which have brought about an explosion in the number of regulations affecting schools. This shift of authority from the local level to centralized levels often stems from legitimate purposes, but the overall erosion of local control is rarely recognized.

In the past, state and federal courts had little to do with shaping school programs, but today they set detailed priorities for education in such issues ranging from student rights to bilingual education. Moreover, each year state legislatures are passing more bills affecting local public education that further enlarge the state codes of education. Rarely do states cut back on these codes. Meanwhile, on the federal level, Congress provides funds for everything from schools in low income areas to metric education—but inevitably with strings attached.

Big losers in all of this have been local district boards as well as staffs of individual schools and the parents of students attending them. Since so many policies are now formed at higher than the local level, district staffs require extra administrators, technical help, and money, simply to present their needs to the courts or to the appropriate officials in state capitols and Washington. For parents, the situation is particularly frustrating. They are, of course, deeply concerned about conditions in their children's neighborhood school, yet in most cases are unable to influence policy at the district office, let alone in the state capitol or Washington, D.C.

In my judgment, the pendulum has swung too far towards centralization of control with our activist courts and federal and state authorities. It is within this overall trend of centralization of school policy that I wish to address the topic today: political issues in federal-state relations. Indeed, the federal government is only one of the forces centralizing local education. This trend should be kept in mind as we examine the need for more flexibility in the state/local administration of federal programs.

Federal-State Relations in Perspective

For the last 15 or so years, as all of you know, we had a period under the Johnson administration called "creative federalism" with a large-scale growth in federal categorical aid. One of the concepts involved in "creative federalism" was that there could be a simultaneous expansion of federal and state and local influence over education, but particularly stressing expansion of federal and state power. Prior to creative federalism, theorists saw federal aid as a zero sum game. In effect, any expansion of federal aid subtracted from the policy control and influence of states. In creative federalism the federal government tried to expand its power over education by categorical programs, but at the same time, tried to expand state control of education through the expansion of state administrators and the ability of states to approve local applications and formulate state plans. In many ways, this simultaneous expansion of federal and state power was successful. There is no question that there has been a large-scale change in the staff and impact of state departments of education, but with it came the inevitable problems of categorical aid. As Wilbur Cohen put it:

> What you have to do in the American political system is construct a category that appeals to people. Education is too broad a thing to appeal. Or health—everybody is for education and health. But if you say that we're going to reduce heart disease or find a cure for cancer, now that has real political appeal. Categorical programs also are useful in expressing a federal attitude that something is important.

The criticisms of categorical aid are legion, and I do not need to repeat them here.

The Nixon administration, under the doctrine of "New Federalism," attempted to do something about some of the well-known problems of categorical aid. Although the proposal for special revenue-sharing in education, endorsed by Presidents Nixon and Ford, encouraged some limited grant consolidation, no major changes were made in the present delivery system. The Nixon proposals were stalemated in a Democratic Congress; President Ford's proposals for radical grant consolidation were never seriously considered. We had some consolidation around the edges, particularly with regard to such programs as Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Despite the talk in new federalism of increased state and local flexibility, the Nixon-Ford era saw a large increase in unfunded state mandates, such as Public Law 94-142. There were enormous numbers of new regulations promulgated and, of course, the courts were very active. Overall, the Nixon-Ford policies attempted to move toward more state flexibility. What we ended up with were tight federal budgets and increased federal mandates to state and local education.

What is the shape of Carter-Califano federalism? We have no theme to summarize it and, indeed, the trends seem somewhat contradictory. Unlike the previous three national administrations, the first year of the Carter administration did not reveal a clear preference or shift toward either decentralization or centralization. Instead, mixed signals were given. The President's memorandum urging departments and agencies to consult regularly with state and local governments concerning policy, management, and financial decisionmaking, suggested that the decentralization thrust of the Nixon and Ford administrations would continue. Statements by Jack Watson, the head of the White House intergovernmental affairs office, underscored this apparent commitment on the part of the administration to genuine communication, consultation, and coordinattion with state and local representatives. The fact that the President was a former governor lent additional credence to this position.

On the other hand, actions taken by the Administration during the year raised some doubts about these developments. Soon after President Carter took office, an assessment of the federal regional councils was launched, and the regional presence was quickly reduced. We are all aware of the decimation of the Office of Education's regional presence. While chief state school officers may not bemoan the end of the regional offices, it clearly is a sign of recentralization in Washington of the decisionmaking style under Carter and Califano. The decisions to centralize were made for the most part without consultation with the state or local officials, again suggesting a reemergence of authority at the national level.

The Carter administration has expanded "direct federalism" by increases in such programs as CETA that bypass state governments. The demand for bypassing states has been escalated recently by such groups as the National Education Association, National School Boards Association, and Children's Defense Fund. It is ironic that this bypassing movement has accelerated at precisely the time that most states have modernized their executive and legislative branches along the lines advocated by reformers over the years. One major outcome of this reform movement is a state government that is presumably more able to assist local governments, particularly cities, in solving their problems. It is noteworthy that many of our largest cities are becoming virtual wards of the federal government. The federal government provides 47½% of the general revenue of 15 large cities (excluding education). For example, the federal government provides 76% of the revenue of Buffalo, 64% of the revenue of Newark, and 56% of the revenue of St. Louis. These kinds of trends raise questions about the long-term state leverage over the biggest cities. The state bypass trend was accentuated by the $1.5 billion Youth Employment Act of 1977 (an expansion of CETA). Cooperation between the education and manpower establishments is mandated on the local level, but no mechanism exists for coordination or involvement of state policy makers. All contracts are between LEAs and local CETA prime sponsors, while the state is left with the responsibility to formulate a five-year state vocational education plan!

In sum, Carter-Califano federalism does not seem to involve any broad rethinking of federal-state political relations. There is some evidence of "hardening of the categories," tougher federal enforcement, and a step-up in federal oversight of state civil rights activities. On the other hand, to show that there is no clear consistent policy one way or the other, we see improvements such as a proposed federal-state compensatory education matching program and proposals by the administration to better mesh Title I regulations with state compensatory programs. As yet, the Carter-Califano era does not appear to contain a distinctive style of federal-state relations. We observe marginal changes, some tending to increase state flexibility and power, and some tending to decrease it.

Current Views of State and Local Officials

The Rand Corporation conducted a literature review and interviews of 20 federal-level specialists, as well as 104 education officials in eight states and 12 school districts in 1977. Their respondents represented large industrial states and big cities, plus suburban and rural areas. The interviews found that most respondents agreed that federal aims were legitimate and consistent with state aims in new policy arenas such as compensatory education and bilingual education. Indeed, federal programs had stimulated new state programs. On the other hand, state respondents opposed the imposition of federal regulations for programs where states had large-scale prior experience (e.g., education of the handicapped, vocational education). State and local respondents particularly opposed imposition of federal regulations where there was a very modest federal financial role.

It is interesting, however, that state respondents saw federal aims as broadly consistent with their own, and expressed impatience only over disagreements about the nature of the implementation. Respondents in large school districts saw federal, state, and local aims as largely similar. Their objections centered on adequacy of aid and specific regulations. Small districts, particularly rural ones, felt that the federal aims were inappropriate for their needs, and shifted too often. In other parts of the

Rand survey we saw a significant split in the perception of urban versus rural areas.

The Rand study tended to confirm results from a study by Joel Berke and myself in the early 1970s. First, there is a large variation in patterns of state-local control. In some states, the SEAs have major administrative and budgeting power over the state's school districts; in other states, the state agency is a conduit for transmitting federal funds, occasionally relying on friendly persuasion. Second, the various clients of the federal programs were not as well represented in state politics as one would expect. For example, compensatory education and bilingual interest groups were just beginning to flex their muscles. Third, legislatures and governors' offices generally knew very little about federal aid to education, except in a few cases, about aggregate fiscal impact. This situation was gradually changing but still had not changed much from the early 70s.

The Rand study found that state directors of federal programs, in effect, played the role of federal allies with their employer, the SEA. In effect, the federal government has created its own internal allies in state departments of education by the process of funding categorical aid administrators. This often creates additional demands at local and state levels for state categorical funding to reinforce the federal categories.

State and Local Problems with Federal Program Administration

The main complaint of states and school districts in the Rand study was the lack of a comprehensive and consistent federal education policy. Despite this federal focus on target groups, the federal government behaves as if its strategies were part of an integrated program. For example, mandating specific learning strategies "like the least restrictive environment" for handicapped children accentuates the difficulties of serving overlapping groups of students, thereby making it harder to carry out policy.

Almost all of the Rand respondents decried federal insensitivity to variations in state and local conditions; specifically, inflexibility and detailed regulations. Rural states and districts were particularly frustrated by what they termed federal insensitivity to their special problems. Large districts had political ties at the state houses and in Washington, so they were able to circumvent or reinterpret the state department of education and federal regulations to some degree. All states and districts felt the federal government was too far from local realities to understand the effects of its actions. In particular, they felt that the federal government was ignorant of LEA conditions.

The objection most often voiced concerned excessive federal paper work requirements. States objected to strict fiscal accountability based on past experiences in the "worst states," as well as conflicts with general education policies. Small and rural districts felt themselves ignored or victims of federal policy. They believed themselves largely powerless.

Alternative Federal Aid Strategies

There are at least four proposed alternatives to the present federal aid system that would alleviate the problems described above. The first, the Domenici-Bellmon bill, gives SEAs and LEAs more flexibility while at the same time maintaining federal priorities. However, there are serious flaws in the administrative structure it proposes, and it does not succeed in integrating federal programs into the overall curriculum of local school districts. This bill is largely dead because of lack of broad-based support. The professional groups most likely to support such changes are too concerned with reauthorization of Title I to expend their political resources on basic restructuring of the federal role. Client groups are reluctant to endorse any changes that might diminish their status or visibility in federal programs serving their particular needs.

The Domenici-Bellmon bill allows each state to decide whether it wants to consolidate certain federal aid programs. On the whole, state education agencies moderately favor the idea in the Rand survey. One weakness cited by the states was a lack of the necessary reorganization of USOE to accommodate such changes. Probably interest in this bill has also waned because of the current proposal for a department of education.

A second alternative federal aid strategy would be comprehensive state planning. Presumably, this activity would be linked with comprehensive local planning. These comprehensive plans would differ from the numerous compliance documents now required for many federal programs. Each state and local agency, particularly states, would be required to draw up a comprehensive plan indicating how all funds—local, state and federal—would be spent and meshed into federal priorities. Every plan would presumably contain both an outline for a comprehensive educational program for students and a specification of the additional services to be delivered to students with special needs. State plans would be less specific than LEA plans. They would indicate in a general way a state's top program priority shared by most or all of the local education agencies. The federal government could use these plans by mandating a comprehensive state plan and specifying how federal funds will be spent and how they will be linked with the state and local priorities. These plans would not be *ex post facto* documents and would have to be developed in consultation with various levels of government. Each plan would probably be a compromise acceptable to both levels.

The advantage of comprehensive planning is that the federal government could still "cut its own funding pie" and maintain the integrity of its target populations. Hopefully it would also help to integrate federal, state and local educational priorities.

This approach has many problems, including whether most SEAs have either the capacity or the incentive to engage in such planning. A history of previous failures of such management schemes indicates that there is a lack of incentive and a lack of conceptual underpinning for such efforts. Second, the process assumes that the present administrative network of categorical program staff, at all three levels of government, can be changed, and that these people can begin to think as generalists and work across programs. Perhaps a new department of education could spur such reorganization at the federal level.

When one considers past experience, the conclusion is that comprehensive planning is an idea that should be tried on a trial basis over the next five to ten years. A number of states have shown interest in the process, and such experimentation could help provide alternatives for the federal government to consider. Again, a new department of education could provide states and local districts with a new organization scheme that would provide a better mesh with comprehensive planning. Federal officials could provide states and school districts with an incentive by agreeing to exempt those states and locals that engage in comprehensive planning from certain federal program regulations.

Such experiments, however, are likely to be conducted by the best organized states and locals; therefore, it may be difficult to base national policy on results of a demonstration which is not representative. Moreover, comprehensive planning in some states has degenerated into mindless paper work. But comprehensive planning *does meet* many of the Rand respondents' objections to the present federal aid system—greater sensitivity to state and local differences, possible reductions in federal administrative requirements, and greater state and local freedom to choose their own approaches to implementing shared goals.

A third alternative would be marginal changes permitting greater administrative flexibility in the management of the present federal grant system. Some possibilities are: the use of a consolidated application, longer federal funding cycles, and a mechanism to link federal programs with similar state categorical programs. For example, the administration has already proposed methods for state compensatory education programs to be better meshed with comparable federal programs. The administration would reward states that have made a commitment to disadvantaged students and provides an incentive to other states to develop similar programs. The federal government has also been moving in some ways towards longer funding cycles to permit better state planning. These alternatives obviously are not dramatic changes in the existing federal role.

The final alternative that has been widely discussed is differential treatment of states. Most studies of state administrative capacity and enforcement indicate a very wide range of state effectiveness and inclination to enforce federal objectives. In the Rand survey a bare majority supported the concept of treating some states differently, particularly based on state performance standards. This idea has been around a while, but has never been implemented because of our inability to come up with objective criteria to sort out which states should get differential treatment. Presumably, the differential treatment would include exemption from federal requirements and the ability to pool federal categorical funds. The only criteria that seem acceptable to SEAs and LEAs are: 1) state fiscal ability; 2) student need, such as the proportion of students in the lowest quartile on tests of basic achievement; and 3) consistency of federal and state aims as indicated by the presence of one or more state compensatory education programs or other similar federal-state linked efforts. Given the lack of agreement on criteria, the differential treatment argument seems to be a variant on alternative 3, whereby states with programs similar to federal programs may be granted flexibility.

The passage of California's Proposition 13 and the spreading tax revolt may add a new dimension to differential federal policy. California Congressmen have proposed counting the increased federal receipts caused by Proposition 13 property tax reductions as part of maintenance of effort in education programs. When states cut the property tax, homeowner deductions on the federal income tax are also reduced. The federal government will collect between $1 billion and $2 billion in additional revenue from Proposition 13. At the same time, California's LEAs may have difficulty maintaining prior year expenditures in a variety of federal programs, including handicapped and vocational education programs. Senator Cranston's (D-Cal.) bill would provide California with about $1 billion in "credit" toward maintenance of state/local effort as a way for the federal government to rebate its increased income tax collections caused by Proposition 13. Proposition 13 also raises difficult questions for CETA workers who must be fired if their superiors are laid off because of property tax cuts. Schools employ many CETA workers.

It is unlikely that California can cause, on its own, differential federal policies. If the tax revolt spreads, however, enough states may be involved to form a coalition for passage.

The probability of a new department of education seems to be increasing. But part of the price of political acceptance has been the elimination of major programs other than those in HEW's Office of Education. This scaled-down department of education may not be enough of an organizational innovation to encourage rethinking the basic assumptions of federal/state relations. The 1979 federal budget outlook does not augur well for a dramatic change in the traditional federal financial role. Incrementalism looks to be the likely outcome. There are no indicators that the Carter Administration is rethinking federal/state relations in general or for education in particular. Consequently, the options outlined above (with some minor variations) appear to be the policy agenda for federal/state relations. Perhaps it is time for various interstate organizations to come up with new approaches.

Chapter III

Political Issues in the Relation Between Education and State Government

by

Jack M. Campbell
Former Governor of New Mexico

I am a member of a rare and dying species—truly retired politicians. In the spectrum of endangered species we fall somewhere between the snail darter and the whooping crane. But perhaps that role gives me a perspective which can offer you some constructive ideas concerning political matters in relations between education and state government.

I am truly delighted with the direction you have given this Summer Institute. Only a few years ago educators and educational administrators were joining PTA's in an endeavor to keep schools "out of politics."

Soon after I registered for this Institute and put on my badge, I entered the hotel elevator with a family dripping from the swimming pool. The father looked at my "Chief State Schools Officers Institute" badge and asked me the point blank question: "What is a chief state school officer?" As the family debarked on the fifth floor, I responded: "A chief state school officer is a person responsible in each state for public education, usually from kindergarten through high school." Whether or not that is an appropriate definition, I have given it more thought since the question was asked.

I have wondered who and what are these chief state school officers? What do I expect them to do? What do I expect them to have to do with state politics? What can I suggest about that relationship that will be constructive and helpful?

You are 56 individuals from 50 states and 6 territories of the United States. You are Democrats and Republicans. Eighteen of you are elected, 38 are appointed, 11 by your governor and 27 by your state board of education. Only 5 of you have served for 10 or more years. Seventy percent took office since 1973, five years ago. Fifty percent have served 3 years or less. You are superintendents, commissioners, directors and secretaries representing 56 very different groups of constituents organized in 56 different ways to supervise the operation of something called a state or a territory.

For some reason or other, you chief state school officers have banded together and established an organization—which has been in existence long enough to become an institution. And that's "what they are." Whether the origin of the Council was for social exchange; hand-holding; real mutual support; identification of common goals; identification of common interests; development of political clout; access to the power centers in Washington (which feels safer with groups than with individuals); or, whatever, you have organized.

Then my third question. What do I expect them to do individually and collectively?

As I answered my friend on the elevator—I expect a chief state school officer to assume "the responsibility and accountability for the delivery of universal public education from pre-school through high school (or further) in a state or territory." To me, that is clearly an honorable but awesome role.

Of course, you know better than I what that role requires in an executive and administrative sense. It means the major role in development of educational goals and the implementation of educational programs appropriate for the state or territory involved. It means, in many places, being the chief executive officer of an elected or appointed board of education. It means responsibility for implementing state laws and integrating federal laws and regulations.

Political Leadership

But to me, your role in education goes beyond these activities. You have an awesome political role. If education is to have political leadership, as it must, you, like it or not, must provide that leadership, however you gained your office. And the name of the game in politics is "constituency." If a state and national educational constituency is to be; if a state educational constituency is to emerge as an effective advocate in your state or territory, you, hopefully in cooperation with your governor, must identify and marshal it. Who else will do it? You know where that constituency is. It is the local boards, the teachers' organizations, and the parents.

And if education is to develop political clout at the national level, you must lead the way. You will need help. The Education Commission of the States was intended by those of us who launched it, to provide a vehicle for that help. My general observation of ECS is that while it has managed reasonable linkages with governors and legislatures, it has in the process, perhaps not adequately, appreciated the role of chief state school officers in state educational politics.

Not only must the educational constituency be identified and marshalled, but alliances must be formed with other groups—not just the poor and the minorities and organized labor which are often, but not always, natural allies; but the more subtle power centers in the communities of the state—such as the local business, financial and industrial interests who simply must support quality education for their own economic needs.

Political Relationships

The political challenge which confronts you is your political relationship with your governor (and other executive departments) and with your legislature. Having served as a state legislator and as a governor, perhaps I have come to understand something of these institutions and the political interplay between them.

First, the Governor you each deal with one at a time is a different personality; each has a different notion of what a governor should be and do; each has different priorities and, generally speaking, each will not be there very long. But, good or bad, sweet or sour, short or long term, while he or she is there, your governor is the prime political mover in your state or territory. If you are to be truly effective, your relationship with your governor must be constructive and productive—even if it is not personally cordial. Such a relationship will almost invariably develop if you have a significant constituency assembled in the educational rooting section. If quality education was a major promise in your governor's campaign, you are in luck—it only needs to be converted to firm commitment and necessary program development. If quality education was not a major promise (and if it wasn't, you may bear some blame), then your work is cut out for you. In my judgment, you have a clear political obligation to move aggressively toward a process which will set public education in its proper place on your governor's agenda, beginning with the first legislative message.

If it is clear that the Governor will not become your educational ally, then you must assume the full leadership role in developing, and proposing to the legislature educational policy. That means using that constituency you have marshalled and using it wisely. Each part of that constituency of yours has its own axe to grind: the teachers' salaries and benefits; the PTA's local control; the administrators—capital outlays and operating funds; and so on and on. Somebody has to pull it together—identify and prioritize issues—develop consensus, and move on. To paraphrase a once popular song—that somebody is nobody but you.

Assuming you have the political skill to put a program before the legislature, suffice it to say that it is an untidy and frustrating game, but it is the only game in town.

Effective Legislative Programs

There are a number of steps which you and your staff can take to improve the effectiveness of their legislative programs:

- Identify and *know* the real legislative leadership and be prepared to respond to it quickly.
- Coordinate requests and the responses to these requests. The person who handles these requests should be respected by the legislature, be comfortable with the legislative process, and knowledgeable about the laws relating to education.
- Analyze legislative proposals regarding education and prepare reports to interested groups.

- Keep in touch, systematically, with legislative advisory groups in state and local educational organizations, parents and citizens groups, and marshal the constituency.
- Select carefully those staff members who should attend committee hearings.
- Test and report the effects of proposed changes in the state school system.
- Distribute proposed bills to educational organizations and groups.
- Provide speakers for clubs and groups interested in new legislation.
- Summarize and call attention to special points raised at legislative hearings.
- Disseminate highlights of testimony and progress of bills as quickly as possible by special notices, through periodicals, and through Monday morning summary meetings.
- Notify legislators of grants to school districts or to other recipients located in each legislative district. Maintain legislative contacts year round.

During all of this activity, you should be a visible and active leader.

Finance

When education issues are debated by and between the legislature and the governor, the bottom line is usually money. If legislators and the governor seem obsessed with a fiscal balance, it is because they know their ability to tax and govern has practical limitations. And public education consumes more of the state budget than any other service; so education budgets are competing for state funds with all other departments, including many that have strong political leadership. The education department becomes especially vulnerable when it must carry much of the responsibility for such controversial actions as financial aid to local educational agencies, reorganization or consolidation of local districts, desegregation, busing, and salary negotiations with teacher organizations.

Legislative appropriation and finance committees are from your point of view the most significant legislative committees. They generally attract lawmakers who expect to cut appropriation requests. Good relationships with these committees is essential if you are to be a successful advocate for education. The chairperson and members of the education committees may be helpful in this activity, but the clout is where the money is.

Lobbying

We are all lobbyists. Political parties have become ineffective in shaping legislative action in most states. Political demands are communicated and translated into policies by interest groups. The skilled lobbyist, which you are—or must become—is an agent communicating the position of a group on a given issue to someone he believes can influence the outcome. It also is the lobbyist's job to communicate the notion of group power. He must speak, or appear to speak, for a large, powerful, and worthy constituency—the business community, the children, the people. Government has become primarily the arbiter in this conflict of special interests.

Most of the ongoing efforts to gain and exercise influence over state educational policy are made by organized groups. Business, labor, and farm organizations often get involved in a wide range of major issues. For the most part, they become active because the issue of the state's role in education is usually a question of revenue—dividing the financial pie. How much tax money is to be made available to schools, and how is it to be raised? Labor groups may oppose increased sales taxes or cigarette taxes, while business interests may throw their weight against programs which depend on the income tax for support. Farm associations are often spokespersons for various kinds of conservative interests. They are likely to oppose anything which will increase the tax burden on real property. They often are deeply concerned about school consolidation and the closing of small rural schools.

None of these groups would *oppose* schools *per se*. They see their disagreements as differences of opinion over the means to achieve desirable ends. You must seek to stress *consensus* about the value of education, but you cannot escape the inevitable give-and-take in trying to reach a compromise with all the relevant interests in that state's political system.

State education groups derive a substantial portion of their effectiveness from the basic source of influence in a democratic society, strategically placed numbers. There are thousands of teachers and other school people in each state located in every town in every county in every legislative district. The school people are relatively well-educated; they have considerable prestige, especially when school-board members are involved. They are part of an organizational structure which alerts them to legislative concerns and can do so more effectively than most interest groups.

However, schools and the school leaders must look to the public as a whole for approval of their values and programs. Local power and decision-making often resides in a few seldom-publicized leaders—largely in the industrial, commercial and financial network of interests. It is up to the educational leadership to know who these people are and how to reach them to explain long-range programs and their economic meaning for the community and the state.

These unofficial leaders usually establish their alliances over a period of years through friendship, family, business and political ties. The favorable support of such an informal, influential group can mean a great deal to the political success of any educational program. Most of these leaders are open-minded about well-substantiated facts presented in support of quality educational programs.

Public and private groups and special interests can influence decisions regarding education, but in the final analysis it is you who will act as the bargaining agent—"the broker" of education's power, and its future.

Chapter IV

Political Issues in "Local Control" of Education

by

Thomas A. Shannon
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Political issues encompass virtually any topic of interest to the public. When we add the concept of "local control of education," we are talking about anything the people see influencing the governance and operation of the public schools in the local community.

In our rough-and-tumble form of check-and-balance government, artfully designed to prevent any one person or group of persons from obtaining too much power, forces impact upon the local at *all* levels of society—from the neighborhood, its larger community, local city or county government, and the three branches of our state and federal governments. Many persons point to these many and diverse forces impinging upon public school governance and decry what they brand as "chaos and confusion."

But, the governance of the public schools in our nation is a fundamental part of government. Thus, it too is subject to the check-and-balance approach. It is part of the good old American system and must share part of the disdainful praise of Winston Churchill, who said that democracy is the least efficient but very best form of government in the history of the world.

The Politics of Education

Local control of education is influenced greatly by national issues—the politics of education. Consequently, the University of Virginia recently sponsored a symposium on "The Changing Politics of Education: Prospects for the 1980's." The university gathered together scores of "scholars and practitioners from a variety of fields within and without education" to present papers evaluating present and future trends in the politics of education. The symposium's central purpose derived from Thomas Jefferson's eloquent and oft-quoted view: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

From this two-hundred-year-old precept, the conference participants took a close, critical, and comprehensive look at education—kindergarten through college—examining the developing local, state and federal relationships. Interwoven throughout the conference were five common themes:

- *Politics are an inextricable part of educational governance and administration.* To believe that education is "above" or "outside" politics is to be naive.
- *While many of the traditional ideas about education are relevant, we must retain the "timeless" ones and cast off the outdated.* For example, the four main Jeffersonian themes on education are timeless:

—Education must be useful;
—education deserves to be adequately funded through government;
—education is "a necessary handmaiden to effective citizenship," and
—education is a valid end in itself because "an educated life is a thing of beauty" and indispensable to "the pursuit of happiness."

- *Outmoded practices and relationships in educational governance and administration must change as we move into the 1980's.* These changes will include an increase in the number of federal laws relating to education, an emerging role for the states as conduits for federal funds and regulations to local districts, continued emphasis on school finance reform and other educational policy initiatives at the state level.
- *Change is coming to education, but it will be evolutionary—not revolutionary.* Do not look for quantum jumps—instead, adjust your bifocals for incremental changes.
- *The training of school administrators must be improved.* Their evolving role is perceived as planning, mediation and power brokering. The administrator will need help to be successful in this role.

The Local Perspective

From this balcony of global perspective, let us focus on the local community.

The political mettle of public-school governance in America today is representative government. The school board, which is directly or indirectly responsible to the electorate, is modern representative government in the *purest* sense. As representatives of the people, school-board members are selected by, govern the schools in, and thus are answerable to the people of the local community. It is as close as representative government can be to pure democracy.

In these days of media-induced populism among our political leaders and governance by initiative elections, the whole concept of representative government needs restating. As Edmund Burke told the electorate of Bristol in 1774: "Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving, you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

The quality of courage that Burke identified in the 18th Century as indispensable to the political character of a worthy representative also must be held by the school-board member of today.

The public schools now are swept up in an anti-tax, anti-government cyclone of unprecedented proportions. This movement, epitomized by the recent passage of the Proposition 13 initiative by California voters and by consideration of similar measures in other states this fall, could result in the ultimate destruction of true representative local governance of public schools. Not only does this movement trammel upon the poor and fail to provide real relief from escalating costs to homeowners and renters; it also threatens an insidious shift of public-school governance from the local to the state level.

As advocates for the people, school-board members will be exercising Burke's "judgment" in dealing with such issues. In arguing the case for preserving local control of the public schools, they will emphasize three fundamental ideas:

- *The people want to protect the quality of their public schools.* This assertion is backed both by reasonable judgment and polls that could bring school-board members into direct confrontation with other local-government representatives—everybody fights for the same or a larger share of a smaller take.
- *There must be what Ambassador John K. Galbraith calls a "social balance" in our society:* "In a good, civilized and stable society there has to be a balance between the supply of public and of private goods and services [because] there is little merit in having clean houses and filthy streets, good television and bad schools or great personal wealth if its possessors can not venture out without fear into the streets."
- *Any revisions to the tax laws should be comprehensive and not piecemeal—lest essential public services be disrupted.*

In the political system through which our public schools are governed, the forum for advocacy encompasses the local community and the legislative, executive and judicial branches of our state and federal governments. And school-board members must be the prime local advocates, coordinating their efforts with PTA leaders and other lay persons who share their deep concern for local school governance. While school administrators and teachers can give great credibility to the advocates through superior professional performance, their position as public employees softens the impact of any of their rhetoric. It is the school-board member who must carry the banner and lead the fight.

There is no question but that the Proposition 13 initiative is one of the premier political battles school-board members must fight for education—not only in California but also in many other states where the issue is taking on prairie-fire dimensions. Proposition 13—which limits property-tax support for California public schools—is also hapless mischief. Its 2-to-1 win at the polls is a message for lawmakers and educators alike. But it is *not* an anti-school message. It is a *tax* message. As California State School Superintendent Wilson Riles told a joint legislative conference committee attempting to devise a financing plan to bail out the public schools and other local governmental entities on June 15, 1978 after the passage of Proposition 13, "A recent poll revealed that if cuts were to be made in public services, 82% of those polled would prefer that they be made in areas other than education."

Any tax system must be structured in light of economic realities. As the economic situation changes, the tax system also must change. The tax system must reflect changes in the economy that stem from a variety of sources such as inflation, devaluation, escalating labor costs in key industries, and shortages of critical items. In California's case, residential housing costs have skyrocketed in the past few years, tripling and quadrupling in some cities. As the market prices of housing increased, so did the assessed valuation, required to be pegged at 25% of the market price. The property-tax bill to pay for public school and other local governmental services is based on assessed valuation.

In California, the governor and the legislature either did not appreciate the importance of keeping the tax system in balance with the economy, or failed to provide effective leadership in making the necessary adjustments to the tax system. When they finally did respond in a hurry-up fashion, it was the old story of "a day late and a dollar short." And it is the school districts and other local government units that must bear the brunt of this tragic lack of leadership.

For local school-board members in California, the task is twofold. They must (1) assert leadership in influencing the executive and legislative branches to restructure the tax system so that the quality of education can continue to improve (which indeed it must to equip California youth with the qualities necessary to survive and prosper in the 21st Century) and (2) protect local representative governance of the public schools.

- *School people must thwart any proposal to shift control of the public schools to the state level.* The old saw about control being exercised by the governmental level providing the funds is invalid in this context because there are no "state" dollars—only "local" dollars. The *source* of the funds (i.e., local) should not be confused with the *distribution process* (i.e., state). School people will have to be alert lest the California legislature stumble into a school financing plan that would magnify the state control—at the expense of local control—of public-school governance and administration.

- *In considering any retrenchment proposals, school boards must ensure that budget cuts do not make effective governance impossible.* They must avoid budget cuts that would halt money for administrative and secretarial assistance to school boards; school board or district policy development; legal counsel; participation in educational and leadership programs; or publications on school-board governance and district administration. Such cuts would hobble school boards to such an extent that competent governance could be rendered impossible.

Certainly educators have a responsibility to formulate budget cuts that would minimize the impact upon the classroom's instructional program. But school boards, committed to lay control of, and accountability for, local public education, cannot afford to make budget cuts in their own support services to the point where they are no longer able properly to perform their governance functions. If school boards cut their own governance hamstrings through injudicious budget reductions, local lay control of public education in California will *die*. And the anomaly is that the death of local school boards would occur at a time when *lay* leadership of the public schools would be most needed. For here is what the passage of Proposition 13 has signaled:

- The beginning of a period of extreme turbulence in public-school operation brought on by school-district staff demoralization and controversies over job rights;
- a total reappraisal of how public education should be financed in California as the governor and state legislature cast about in political agony to rescue the instructional programs of the public schools from disaster; and
- a renewed effort to increase public support for the public schools, without which no real progress in leading California out of the darkness of Proposition 13 could be made.

While Proposition 13 is at the forefront of the local control issue, other concerns are also important:

We clearly are in a time of contraction of student population. This shrinkage is reflected in the generation of enormous pressures to close schools and to reduce necessary programs. Smaller numbers of students can cause a "contraction contradiction," in which there are fewer youngsters in school, but richer programs. Organized teachers recognize this principle in their campaign for lower class size, which, incidentally, also permits continued growth of the profession despite declining enrollment. Another result of shrinking enrollments is the "contraction phenomenon," where everything gets hotter. That is, decisions about where to cut in a retrenchment process are more difficult and controversial than decisions about where to expand in a growth situation.

All of these problems will result in increased accountability for educational programs because of more competition for the dollars among the various local governmental entities.

Governance Crisis

There is a governance crisis at the *federal, state and local level.*

At the *federal level* there is a continuing attempt to expand federal control through the Congress enacting categorical programs and the Executive Branch promulgating "regulations, interpretations, and guidelines"—all for what is perceived by congress members and bureaucrats as in the national interest and in accordance with federal priorities.

At the *state level,* a by-product of federal categorical programs is the emphasis on *state* boards of education and *state* superintendents at the expense of *local* boards of education. State superintendents dealing directly with local superintendents short-circuit school-board effectiveness and do injury to representative government in public education.

The relations between state boards of education and local boards of education are of real concern to all school-board members. The two levels agree on certain issues and disagree on others. For example, both state and local board members represent *lay* governance of education, and they are united in the perception that governance of the public schools is a matter reserved to the state, not the federal government.

Attempts by state legislatures and federal agencies to get school governance back to "the grass roots" invariably bypass local school boards in favor of non-elected citizens who exercise authority but have no real responsibility, and who, in a sense, represent no one.

A public-school finance crisis threatens to push towards mediocrity under the guise of "equal protection," articulated in the *Serrano* case. There is also the threat of public funding for private and parochial schools. An example of this danger is the Minnesota case now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court—to test the federal constitutionality of a statute that provides textbooks and other educational materials and aids to students attending private and parochial schools, as well as the *Jarvis-Gann* threat to public-school finance.

Administrative unionism is an issue that has always concerned school boards. New impetus was given to this concern last fall when the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals established a "joint commission" to assist their memberships in organizational matters and collective bargaining situations. Of course, school boards have no quarrel about organizational matters, but collective bargaining is often another matter entirely. The opposition of school boards to collective bargaining for administrators is anchored in several concerns:

- *The impact of collective bargaining on management relationships.* School administration is *not,* as many observers believe, a "power struggle." If all of the school administrators in the U.S. could be organized into local collective bargaining units, that would *not* affect the basic "power" of the school board under state laws to make final decisions to remove administrators for cause, or to reorganize the administration of a district.

Most assuredly, collective bargaining would alter how school boards' powers are exercised—but the amount of power would remain the same. But, it would affect the human relationships, primarily between the superintendent and the administrators, and secondly, between the school board and the entire administration. This effect would be characterized by an adversary thrust on compensation and other matters, as the administrative bargaining unit attempted to expand its scope of negotiations. And this "adversariness" would, through bruised feelings and ruptured egos, carry over to other aspects of school administration.

School-board members, as representatives of the people, are entitled to the cooperation of the entire administrative team. Collective bargaining creates a "we/they" atmosphere that diminishes the school board's prospects of vigorously implementing its governance policies. In the *private* sector, managerial personnel are excluded from collective bargaining for this reason.

The school site level, headed by the school principal, should be the primary locus of implementation of educational policy in the school district. To exclude the principal from management is utter myopia.

- *The "administrative team" is a sound alternative to administrator collective bargaining.* However, in forming a "team," it is important to define the individual roles played by school-board members, superintendents, and administrator associations.

There has been no real identification of the issues that drive the movement—on the one hand, for administrator collective bargaining or, on the other hand, for the administrative team. These important concerns include job security, grievance procedures, binding arbitration, direct access to school-board members, adequate compensation, promotional opportunity in light of enrollment decline, affirmative action, budget retrenchment, and administrator contracts.

Finally, no real attempt has been made at the national level, by associations that have an abiding interest in the issues, to bring all the issues out on the table, discuss them thoroughly, and develop recommended policies and approaches. While there has been a considerable leadership effort on an individual association level, there has been no combined approach.

Citizen Involvement

No view of political issues in local control of schools can be complete without a look at citizen involvement—within the structure of responsible, representative governance of public education.

It is important to remember that schools are governed by policy established by the community's accountable representatives: the school-board members. To an extent, this policy is subject to interpretation at the individual school level. However, the final interpretation of any policy must be made by people who are directly responsible to the board—school administrators. In this principle of local, lay control of—and strict accountability for—public education, clear lines of responsibility must extend to the administrator. At the same time, it is the very essence of democratic government to bring to bear on any issue all of the available expertise and information. I think most school boards strongly support the idea of citizen involvement in school-site decision-making.

We must recognize, however, three potential challenges:

First, educators have to clean up their terminology—for example, the phrase "shared decisionmaking." I am not sure you can find an overwhelming number of administrators who would accept "shared decisionmaking" at face value. Some administrators, for example, would interpret it as a veto policy, not as a process for channeling ideas and opinions toward the person who ultimately—and individually—must make the decisions and accept responsibility for those decisions.

Second, we must develop a process for involving citizens, parents and the entire school community in meaningful and constructive ways. Such a process would set the framework for and would define citizen involvement. As I see it, the major impediment to citizen advisory committees has been the absence of written board policies on just what such committees can—and should—do. What is needed is a process to help citizens understand their role as a part of representative government at the local school level.

Third, we need to acknowledge that citizen involvement is an expensive process. It is a good process, but it is expensive. Whenever you establish advisory groups, you build in a lot of informational needs, which, in turn, take up expensive staff time. Yet, I still would argue that the expense involved in providing information to citizen advisory committees is justifiable.

There is a resurgence of concern on the part of parents and citizens about the public schools. I believe recent Gallup polls reflect a growing sense of powerlessness among many citizens. More and more parents are saying, "Involve us, but involve us in things that have meaning for us and in things that affect the lives of our children." At the same time, more and more school-board members and administrators are reaching out—recognizing that the job of public education is too big to handle alone. These school officials have become all too aware of the need to nurture community support for the schools over an extended period of time—not just when the next budget or bond election comes around.

This interaction is the essence of local control of education—the school board using its authority to involve community members and administrators in making the schools more responsive to community and student needs.

REICHENBACH

Chapter V

Political Issues in School Finance Reform

(The New Politics of Education Finance)

by

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It was simpler in the old days. You could count on the fingers of both hands the people in a state who showed any interest in education finance, let alone understood it or tried to do anything about it. Usually there were one or two interested people in the state education agency, a lonely professor of education finance at the state university, the executive secretary of the state teachers' association, a couple of local school leaders, perhaps three or four legislators, and maybe—but only maybe—a budget analyst who worked for the state budget director.

In those days the local and federal politics of school finance were also relatively simple and non-controversial. At the local level, teachers, administrators, and school boards cooperatively presented school budgets and tax rates to the voters for approval. Most were approved without fuss. At the federal level, the only major aid program was vocational education, and the main federal function was to issue statistical reports.

The politics of school finance today bears little resemblance to the quiet world of yesterday. The sleeping giant that was America's education financing system has not only awakened, but is being visibly transformed by swirling cross-currents of change and challenge. While this transformation is not yet complete, its general dimensions and directions can be identified. Tracing the changes and challenges will lead first to a brief description of six underlying political trends shaping the new politics of school finance. Then I shall discuss the political effects of the most important single change in education finance this decade—the widespread acceptance of new constitutional standards for fairness and equity in education finance. I shall close by discussing the implications for state education officials of new federal interest in the extent to which state education finance systems are equitable for both students and taxpayers.

Political Context of Education Finance

The politics of education finance are inextricably linked to the politics of the total local-state-federal fiscal system. Public education consumes more than $70 billion a year—the largest expenditure category in all state and local government. Yet public education is only one function of government and necessarily competes for funds not only with other governmental functions but with other levels of education. And because of the somewhat separate local tax structure for education, the politics of school finance have always been deeply concerned with taxes.

Within this larger framework, the politics of education finance are characterized by conflict and fragmentation much more intense and fundamental than could have been anticipated even as late as the decade of the 1950's, when as a local school administrator I learned at the grass roots level about the old politics of school finance. Six sources of conflict and fragmentation in education finance are so pervasive that they are national in scope and probably irreversible realities with which state education officials must live.

First of all, there is far more fiscal conflict than there used to be between the special governments of education (i.e., local school districts) and the general governments of municipalities. This is reflected nowhere more clearly than in the flow of federal aid to local governments. In the past fifteen years there have been steady increases of federal aid to local school districts, mostly through categorical grant programs. Despite these increases, federal aid still constitutes only seven or eight percent of school monies—totalling about $5 billion per year. During the same period, however, municipalities continued to separate themselves politically from national education groups and successfully fought for the $6 billion general revenue sharing program and the $4 billion community development program, neither of which may be used directly to support local school programs. The "new coalition" of cities, counties, and states also lacks membership of local or state education agencies. Educators are stuck with the go-it-alone political base they once seemed to crave. This separation is more deeply entrenched now than fifteen years ago, and it is difficult to argue that education is stronger politically because of it.

A second cause of conflict in the politics of education finance is the changing demography of the American population. There is a shrinking proportion of citizens and taxpayers willing to tax themselves directly for education services. This growing reluctance is partially due to the fact that the proportion of the population with children in school is decreasing; in many communities fewer than half of the households have children in school. The proportion of taxpayers who have a personal stake in schools is thus declining. The long-term trend in local taxpayer support of education, reflected in tax elections in local school districts, is fast approaching the level of the heralded taxpayers' revolt. In urban areas it is virtually impossible to obtain voter approval for increased taxes, and in rural areas it is only slightly less difficult. While there are no good national data on voter turnout and dissent at school district tax elections, most observers agree that turnouts are higher and dissent is much stronger than ten or twenty years ago.

A third kind of conflict that characterizes the new politics of education finance is between teachers and their traditional allies in the old politics—parents and school administrators. The days are long gone when teachers, administrators, school boards, and parent groups cooperatively seek community approval for increases in school budgets and taxes. Collective bargaining in education is now a political fact of life, drastically changing not only professional relations but the entire political and social fabric of local school districts. I offer no value judgments about this development. But the political implications are clear: educators now fight among themselves over school budgets and use collective bargaining as the new technique for acquiring new resources for schools and for allocating school resources among the many competing budgetary claims for them.

A fourth cause of conflict in politics of school finance involves the competition and cleavages among urban, suburban, and rural interests. In large part the urban-suburban cleavages are racial in character. In the 1920's and 1930's, city school systems were numbered among the "lighthouse" districts and were considered so well-off that restricting further increases in their spending was the problem discussed by school finance experts. Most of the laws enacted then to restrain cities are still in effect despite drastic changes in urban conditions and obvious needs for added educational services. Now a new set of rural problems faces education, including eroding tax bases, out-migration of teachers and administrators, and reconsideration of the long-assumed merits of school consolidation. In several states rural and poor suburban districts have formed coalitions with hard-pressed cities to obtain more equalized finance systems, but this relationship is not yet normal in most states.

A fifth source of conflict in the politics of education finance relates to special categories of education funding. Categorical funding is usually sought by groups who believe that local schools have not met special needs of their constituencies. Categorical funding from both state and federal governments has progressed to the point where the traditional local-state-federal structure of education finance may no longer remain the fundamental underpinning of education finance. Taking its place is a functionally fragmented but vertically integrated political system that operates to maintain categorical aid programs. In the vocational education area, for example, close linkages exist between major local recipients of vocational education funds, state vocational education officials, and the relevant federal offices in both executive and legislative branches. A similar vertical coalition now links various constituencies of aid for the handicapped. Under this approach, special interests pursue particular aims which may or may not coincide with what is good for education in general. In many states there is now open competition between supporters of categorical programs and others who want to increase the equalizing portions of general school aid formulas. The implications of this trend call for much closer attention than has as yet been paid to it.

A sixth dimension of conflict in education finance is the dramatic new involvement of courts, legislatures, and governors. Increasingly, courts invoke constitutional doctrines of due process and equal protection in areas such as desegregation, bilingual education, sex discrimination, and education of handicapped children, as well as in education finance itself. During the past fifteen years state legislatures have begun to behave as if they were indeed a separate branch of government. Legislators feel that they should no longer be dependent on educators' associations and state departments of education for *all* their education information and policy analysis capability. Similarly, each year ten or fifteen governors, whose predecessors used to sit back and let the education coalition present a negotiated compromise school aid bill, now develop their own proposals and lobby vigorously for them throughout the legislative session. Increases in federal aid, plus innovations in education services (e.g., programs for the handicapped) create new problems of state policy coordination between separate areas within education and between education and other social services. Local-state relations over education policy evidence higher levels of stress and uncertainty partly because of rapid changes in the politics and financing of education.

The Courts and Equity in Education Finance

The first significant court decision in education finance was the 1971 opinion of the California State Supreme Court in *Serrano v. Priest*. (In December, 1976, the California Supreme Court reaffirmed its 1971 decision.) The court held education to be a fundamental interest of both state and federal constitutions:

> "[The California] funding scheme invidiously discriminates against the poor because it makes the quality of a child's education a function of the wealth of his parents and neighbors."

The *Serrano* case became the key legal precedent in school finance. It struck down existing practices but deliberately and scrupulously avoided any judicial prescription of a specific tax or expenditure policy. The California legislature responded to *Serrano* in 1973 with an $800 million school equalization measure, and again in 1977 with a mammoth $4.3 billion, five-year equalization and education reform act.

The idea of court intervention in education finance may properly be said to have begun in the late 1960's with the publication of two books, *Rich Schools, Poor Schools*[1] and *Private Wealth and Public Education.*[2] These books challenged traditional school finance concepts and practices by invoking new constitutional standards and devising new judicial strategies. Arthur Wise, then a doctoral student in education at the University of Chicago, suggested in *Rich Schools* that the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution could be used to persuade federal courts to declare unconstitutional any school finance arrangement that systematically provided a lower level of educational services to the poor than to the rich.

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[1] Arthur Wise, *Rich Schools, Poor Schools.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967.

[2] John Coons, William Clune, and Stephen Sugarman. *Private Wealth and Public Education.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

John Coons, then a law professor at Northwestern University, with two students, Stephen Sugarman and William Clune, analyzed in *Private Wealth* the inequities which were inherent in existing school finance arrangements at the state and local level. Coons and his coauthors suggested constitutional standards of "fiscal neutrality" to guide courts in evaluating school finance programs. That formulation, today widely accepted as a deliberately flexible standard of equity, states simply that the quality of education must not be a function of the wealth of local school districts.

Neither *Rich Schools, Poor Schools* nor *Private Wealth and Public Education* was a best seller by any means, but together they sparked a fundamental reexamination of school finance and thereby permanently changed the way in which the issue is regarded. *Private Wealth and Public Education,* in fact, became the bible of school finance reformers in the early 1970's and was the basis for the *Serrano* case in California and its progeny elsewhere.

Since 1971, courts in Connecticut, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Texas and Washington have adopted the essential argument of *Serrano* and declared the school finance systems in those states unconstitutional. In all, suits have been brought in forty states. Prior to 1973, most of them were based on the equal protection clause of the federal Constitution, but some of the legal challenges were also based on state constitutional equal protection provisions requiring "uniform" or "equal" schooling. A large number of national organizations were active in various aspects of this litigation effort, among them the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the League of Women Voters, the NAACP, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the National Urban Coalition, the American Jewish Congress, the American Civil Liberties Union, and organizations representing Black and Mexican-American interests.

Changes in the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court in the early 1970's did not encourage hope that tests on the constitutionality of school funding schemes would be favorable. The definitive Supreme Court decision came in March, 1973 in *Rodriguez v. San Antonio Board of Education.* The decision dealt a heavy blow to the hopes of school finance reformers; the Court ruled in a five-to-four decision that education was not a fundamental right guaranteed by the federal Constitution, that the Texas system—though blatantly inequitable—did not unconstitutionally discriminate on the basis of wealth, and that the structure of the Texas system was—in constitutional terms—a "reasonable" one for fostering local control. The historic decision cut off any hope of federal constitutional pressure for school finance reform (or, for that matter, for any other reform of state-local delivery of public services), during the tenure of the sitting justices.

But all was not lost. Both explicit and implicit loopholes in the decision left a number of federal grounds open for future legal challenges. Cases can still be brought in federal court challenging those state school finance systems which resulted in absolute deprivation of all educational opportunity, as, for example, when handicapped students are denied schooling. Cases can also be brought when there is a denial of education necessary to exercise First Amendment rights; when there is a constitutionally "suspect" class of individuals (e.g., low income that coincides with school district poverty); and when there is race discrimination and intent to discriminate can be proven.

Most importantly, the *Rodriguez* decision specifically suggested that legal action against inequitable school finance plans was possible on the basis of *state* constitutions and statutes. As if in response to this suggestion, just two weeks after *Rodriguez* the New Jersey State Supreme Court (in *Robinson v. Cahill)* unanimously found the state's structure of school finance to be unconstitutional on the basis of a clause in the New Jersey state constitution requiring the establishment of a "thorough and efficient" system of schools. The *Robinson* decision differed from the *Serrano* case in that in the latter, the court avoided the pronouncement of any mandate regarding the effectiveness of schooling while in *Robinson,* the court stepped squarely into a hornets' nest of ambiguity about education quality as well as financial equity.

These court decisions set in motion three interrelated chains of events in most states. First, the decisions mean that poor school districts eventually receive much more state aid. Second, they mean that the legislature has to come up with a new finance plan to meet the new constitutional standards of equity, which in most states requires major changes in the entire local-state fiscal system. And third, they lead to political infighting and struggles for control among the interested parties.

The New York Case

The most recent of the school finance court decisions is known as *Levittown v. Nyquist.* The case was brought by the Levittown school district, joined by twenty-six other districts on Long Island and throughout the state. New York City and four other cities intervened to bring their special educational and fiscal problems to the court's attention.

On June 23, 1978, State Supreme Court Justice L. Kingsley Smith ruled that New York's present methods of financing education violate both state and federal constitutions because the wealth of local school districts determines the quality of local schools and because state aid fails to correct for the special educational needs and fiscal problems of cities. The effect of Judge Smith's complex decision, most of which is expected to be upheld on appeal, would be to require the legislature to come up with a new statewide system for financing education.

The potentially sweeping impact of *Levittown* is brought even more sharply into focus by two parallel decisions already handed down by the state's highest court. One of these decisions, known as *Hellerstein*, requires that property be assessed at the full market value. It has been customary in New York State for homeowners to receive lower assessments than commercial and industrial properties. Although legislation was recently enacted to delay for three years the enforcement of this ruling, it nonetheless ticks away like a time bomb, threatening major changes in the distribution of property tax burdens among the state's taxpayers.

The other court decision reinforcing *Levittown* is the *Hurd* decision, which struck down a host of fiscal gimmicks the legislature had approved to levy higher urban property tax rates than permitted under the state constitution. Several large cities face serious revenue shortfalls during the next several years as the effects of *Hurd* are felt.

The basic problem with New York State's school finance system is that it is unfair to large numbers of school children and taxpayers. Explaining the system tries the patience of experts and puts even interested citizens to sleep. (One of the trial attorneys representing Levittown described his excitement at testimony by school finance experts by saying it reminded him of how he felt watching grass grow!) The essence of New York's school finance inequities is found where local school districts with very high property valuations have been able to spend large amounts on their schools with lower than average tax efforts. Many local districts with low valuations, on the other hand, have had to exert very large tax efforts only to realize below average expenditures. The outcome has been high taxes and underfinanced schools for residents of poor districts, and lower taxes and well financed schools for the more fortunate. The accident of where a child happens to live has been the major determinant of the level and quality of his education.

This nexus between affluence and spending is what the *Levittown* decision would forbid, but that is virtually all it would do. It would not proscribe the use of a real property tax, nor would it require the legislature to impose uniform statewide spending. It would require that the state make more adequate provision for educating urban school children, but it leaves to the legislature the task of deciding how it is to be done. It poses no mortal threat to the future existence of local school boards, although a new school finance system would surely impose on local boards different taxing and spending ground rules than at present. Although the courts retain jurisdiction in the *Levittown* case and would review legislative action to assure compliance with constitutional standards, Judge Smith carefully refrained from specifying for state officials what a new system would be like or how soon they must enact one.

The process by which a state like New York grapples with the design of a new school finance system is, by the nature of the problem, a complex one. To some extent, school finance reform is a conversation among experts who delight in exchanging obscure technical memoranda. But school finance is too big and too important to be left to the finance experts, and education is too important to be left solely to the educators. The entire apparatus of education governance and of state-local politics will be drawn into the process of designing and enacting reforms in response to the *Levittown* decision. After all, the annual collection and distribution of over $7 billion in taxes is at stake in New York, and the education of the state's millions of school children hangs in the balance.

But despite the seriousness of the problem and the strong probability that the system will soon have to be reformed, New York lacks at present either a comprehensive reform plan or a coordinated state mechanism for developing one. All the main actors in the state's education politics—the regents, the governor, the legislature, and school groups—have advanced new policies in recent years. Some merely perpetuate the mindless irrationality of the old system—in one recent year, all but seven of the state's 700 school districts received state aid based on "save-harmless" provisions rather than the "formula" designed to equalize tax burdens and school opportunity. Other recent proposals represent small steps toward an eventual solution.

Residents and taxpayers of New York face new uncertainties during this reform process. Ultimately, there will be shifts in levels of school spending and in property tax rates in many school districts, but it is difficult to predict just who will be helped and who will be hurt. It will, no doubt, be the wish of the governor and the legislature to minimize the pain and maximize the pleasure, but some pain there surely will be. Some school districts in New York suffer from low property tax valuations and levy high tax rates—some help may be forthcoming for them. Other districts have long enjoyed well financed, even extravagantly financed schools, at relatively low tax rates—higher tax rates and some spending limits may eventually be imposed in such district.

The *Levittown* decision was handed down during the heat of statewide political campaigns. No doubt there will be partisan snipping back and forth about what to do. Seasoned veterans of school finance and property tax reform battles predict several years of intense conflict before the shouting subsides.

But the first step needed in New York is to organize a non-partisan group of distinguished citizens—representing all regions of the state and points of view about the problem—provide the group with access to the nation's most knowledgeable and expert guidance, and ask it to develop one or more proposals for a new, constitutionally acceptable school finance and property tax plan. The frequently bitter factional divisions in New York's education politics suggest that only a new group, balanced in perspective and protected from political interference, can come up with an approach that could attract support from a broad coalition of overburdened taxpayers and underfunded school districts.

Other Influential Factors

Legal challenges are not, however, the only political factors affecting education finance. The social ferment of the civil rights movement and President Johnson's War on Poverty also stimulated state and local governments to focus serious attention on flaws in school financing. Demands for more equitable treatment of the poor and minority groups were a factor in the enactment of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Title I of this Act provided more money (now almost $3 billion per year) for disadvantaged children, but even the additional funding from Title I was rarely enough to offset the handicaps of a state-local tax structure loaded against them.

Another impetus for change is the increasing urbanization of the country and a deepening of the urban crisis. A social and economic sorting-out process leaves aging central cities with an eroding tax base and a population consisting mainly of minorities, elderly, and the poor, all of whom need increasingly expensive public services.

Changes within the educational sector itself further weaken the stability of the traditional structure of school finance. The Conant reports,[3] the development of teacher militancy with its concomitant salary hikes and cost inflation, and even the challenge which Sputnik presented to the U.S. educational system, all put additional strains on public schools. School expenditures increased dramatically during the 1960's and early 1970's. Pupil enrollment grew, then stabilized.

The property tax, always unpopular, comes under intense fire as each year it places an even larger burden on homeowners and, indirectly, on renters. Local taxpayers had begun to bristle long before California's Proposition 13 called national media attention to their plight. This local taxpayer revolt led educators to search harder for new state and federal funds.

State Reforms in Education Finance

The seven years since the first *Serrano* decision have brought unprecedented activity in state courts and legislatures with respect to school finance reform and related tax changes. Many of the changes are not just incremental; they are major overhauls of the system, reflecting one of those rare moments when basic structural revisions are possible. And many of the changes have occurred in states where there was no court pressure for reform, a welcome sign of broad political support for the new finance programs being advocated by reform-oriented scholars and organizations.

The new finance plans that have emerged vary considerably, depending upon how each state defines the central issue of equity. New finance systems which do not provide a lower level of educational services to the poor than to the middle class and the rich are more equitable than traditional finance systems which systematically discriminate against the poor. New finance plans vary per-pupil expenditures according to such factors as pupil characteristics, educational program costs, regional price variations, and educational achievement levels. Usually these variations result in much smaller inequalities than are observed in the traditional system, and in any case they are not as strongly linked to property tax wealth of local school districts.

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[3] James Bryant Conant. *The Comprehensive High School.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1967.

Essentially, two new types of school finance plans are being implemented. The first is full-state funding (FSF). The basic premise here is that the state government assumes responsibility for providing the same quality of education to students throughout the state and sees to it that the tax burden is equal throughout the state. This implies that any differences in spending among districts will be the result of different student needs, such as special educational problems, or different costs of providing equal quality education.

The second plan is district power equalizing (DPE). This assures all school districts equal access to a statewide property tax base while permitting each local community to decide how much education it wants to buy. Under district power equalizing, local tax rates are precisely the same in all districts that choose to spend the same number of dollars per student. Very rich districts do not keep all the money they raise locally for schools; part of the yield goes to the state for redistribution to poorer districts.

Reformed school finance systems are generally some combination of these two approaches, reflecting what is desired and what is politically and economically feasible in the individual state. Both plans meet new court standards, both draw increased general state revenues into education, and both involve property tax reform or relief. But they differ in that DPE permits differences in local spending, while FSF does not.

Progress to Date

Regardless of potential effects of education finance reform on state-local public finance, significant and fundamental changes have overtaken the previously tranquil field of school finance. Almost half of the nation's school children and taxpayers have been affected by the reforms so far. These changes have transformed a narrow and obscure aspect of education, concerned mainly with routine state aid appropriations, into a complex-intellectual and political domain. Involved now are federal and state constitutional standards of fairness and equity, major overhauls of creaky state-local tax and school funding systems, and infusions of new scholarly and organizational perspectives from outside the traditional realm of professional educators. Many of the causes of this upheaval can be traced to basic political trends such as civil rights struggles in the 1960's and the collapse of the parent-teacher coalition that supported school finance prior to the advent of widespread collective bargaining. But much of the credit or blame needs to be accepted by the private philanthropies, principally Ford, Spencer, and Carnegie, and by the National Institute of Education, which through their grants to interested universities and groups have attempted to call attention to finance inequities while supporting the development and implementation of more equitable alternatives.

Some advocates of school finance reform are disappointed with the progress to date. They claim that the new programs do not go far enough, that they almost always involve compromise, and that they cannot be shown to directly improve student achievement in the classroom. But it cannot objectively be denied that what has happened since 1970 in California and New Jersey, in Florida and Maine, in Kansas and Michigan, and in a dozen other states, constitutes a major step forward towards equity. Reforms already adopted provide both more state aid and reduced property tax burdens in poor and urban school districts in twenty states. Additional progress, while never easy to achieve, is clearly possible during the next three-to-five years. Ten years ago, fewer than a dozen people believed it was possible to realize the gains achieved thus far.

Major opportunities for reform exist in key states such as Ohio, Connecticut, Washington and Colorado, where favorable court decisions promise eventual adoption of more equitable plans; in New Jersey, where some progress has been made but much more remains to be done; in New York, where court decisions have ruled unconstitutional the nation's biggest, and perhaps its most irrational, school finance system; and in about ten other states, where a solid basis for reform has been painstakingly laid.

Of the three dozen states which had serious school finance inequities in 1970, slightly more than half (or about twenty states) have adopted major reforms; of these twenty, ten have enacted reforms that are incomplete and can be improved during the next three-to-five years. In the other ten, continuing rear guard action is needed to secure the comprehensive gains already made. In the balance of the states which need to institute school finance reform, the picture is mixed. In a few cases, the struggle appears almost hopeless and no viable reform group or movement is visible. But in most, continued efforts by the network currently engaged in school finance offer a good chance of achieving significant reform during the next few years.

Old and New Networks

Within the field of school finance two somewhat separate groups, or networks, exist: the "traditional" group and the "reformers." The "traditional" school finance community is composed of school administrators, state education officials, and school finance professors in state universities. This group was nurtured through the 1950's and 1960's by the National Education Association and later by the United States Office of

Education. Its intellectual roots are in schools of education, and its constituency is primarily educators.

The "reform" community, on the other hand, has a more diverse composition. Some have "traditional" public school teaching and administrative experience and are affiliated with colleges of education, but most are law professors, economists, political scientists, state legislators, public interest attorneys, members of racial minority groups, or others disenchanted with fifty years of structural *status quo* in state-local fiscal systems for education. Major organizations whose leadership and staff have been active in the reform network include the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the League of Women Voters, the National Urban Coalition, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, the Childhood and Government Project at the University of California at Berkeley, and research and training projects at Teachers College, Columbia University and Stanford University. Reformers have tended to help plaintiffs sue state officials long allied with traditional school finance networks. It would be fair to say that most of the groups and individuals supported by the Ford Foundation are allied with the "reform" network.

The reformers started believing in the late 1960's that there was no way to achieve a truly equalizing finance system through the strategies used by the traditional school finance practitioners. Existing state finance plans were too firmly entrenched to yield quickly or easily to change. Therefore, reformers devised an "end-run" strategy which relied primarily on litigation, and capitalized on both its tangible and intangible effects. Reformers worked directly with governors, legislators, and aggrieved citizens who shared their willingness to tolerate the agonies of years of litigation.

Disagreements between "reform" and "traditional" school finance people arise as often from differences of style, as from goals. Both are fundamentally committed to ideals of quality education and equal educational opportunity, but there is a gap in communication and understanding between them. This lack of communication must be acknowledged before it can be corrected. Traditional finance experts who scoffed at the reformers' legal strategies must be willing to suspend their belief that it is all a perverse conspiracy of lawyers and foundations; reformers, too, must avoid the too easy notion that educational administrators are the natural enemy of school finance reform. The present climate of misunderstanding and suspicion can be overcome only if both sides get together.

There are ways that all of us can foster this cooperation. Some steps have already been taken. Leaders of the reform network and leaders of the Suburban School Superintendents, an association of high-spending suburban school districts, jointly planned and conducted a meeting in November, 1977, to discuss fiscal problems of wealthy suburban school districts. In a few states (e.g., Illinois), finance reform plans have included restrictions on spending by wealthy districts. While this prohibition is the exception rather than the rule (most reforms involve "leveling up" towards the wealthy districts), it awakened old fears that finance reforms could directly cause a deterioration in the quality of education in wealthy districts. Reform experts are now working with the suburban superintendents and with federal officials to design a study of factors which are of special interest for suburban schools, such as declining enrollments, taxpayer revolts, and finance reforms. The American Association of School Administrators recently started a finance project in eight states. The American Education Finance Association, a membership organization, provides an excellent forum for exchanges and communication between the two networks.

Many traditional school finance leaders have now come to welcome collaboration with the reform movement, whereas in the early 1970's overtures for similar collaboration were rejected. And virtually all leaders of the school finance reform movement are happy to work with leaders of school establishment groups who share their willingness to work hard politically for more equitable education finance systems.

Monitoring Equity in Education Finance

During the past ten years, the issue of equity in school financing has gained new visibility, but it has also grown in complexity. The traditional way of thinking about equity was to focus solely on the structure—and sometimes even more narrowly, on the semantics—of state aid systems. Systems were called "equitable" if poor districts received more aid per student than rich districts. Little attention was paid to the *system* as a whole and to whether state aid, even if equalizing, was sufficient to counter the huge disparities in local wealth per student that are found in most states. This conceptually short-sighted idea was exacerbated by the fact that data are now reported to the Federal Government in ways that do not permit analysis by individual states. The basic federal survey instrument (ELSEGIS)[4] does not obtain finance data from the universe of school districts. Thus, the most important policy question in school finance—Is a state school finance system, over time, becoming more equitable?—cannot be addressed with existing federal data.

Steps are being taken to correct this situation. Years of patient work have finally led to a federal decision to start collecting school finance data from every school district through the Common Core Data (CCD) Project, thus permitting analyses over time on a state-by-state basis. Anticipating this event, leaders of the school finance field have launched a School Finance Cooperative to design, test, and encourage the widespread use of a standardized and understandable way of measuring changes, over time, in the equity of state school finance systems. A variety of concepts and measures of equity are being examined. Some will involve measures of equality of expenditures and some will involve measures of fiscal neutrality; some will be tested on a district basis and some on a per-student basis. Attention is also being given to such factors as the cost of education, pupil weighting, race, and sex. The intent is for a well-designed and properly tested system that will make it possible to express in simple and unambiguous terms which states have progressed—and how much—toward fairness in the financing of educational services.

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[4] Elementary and Secondary General Information Survey, administered by the National Center for Education Statistics.

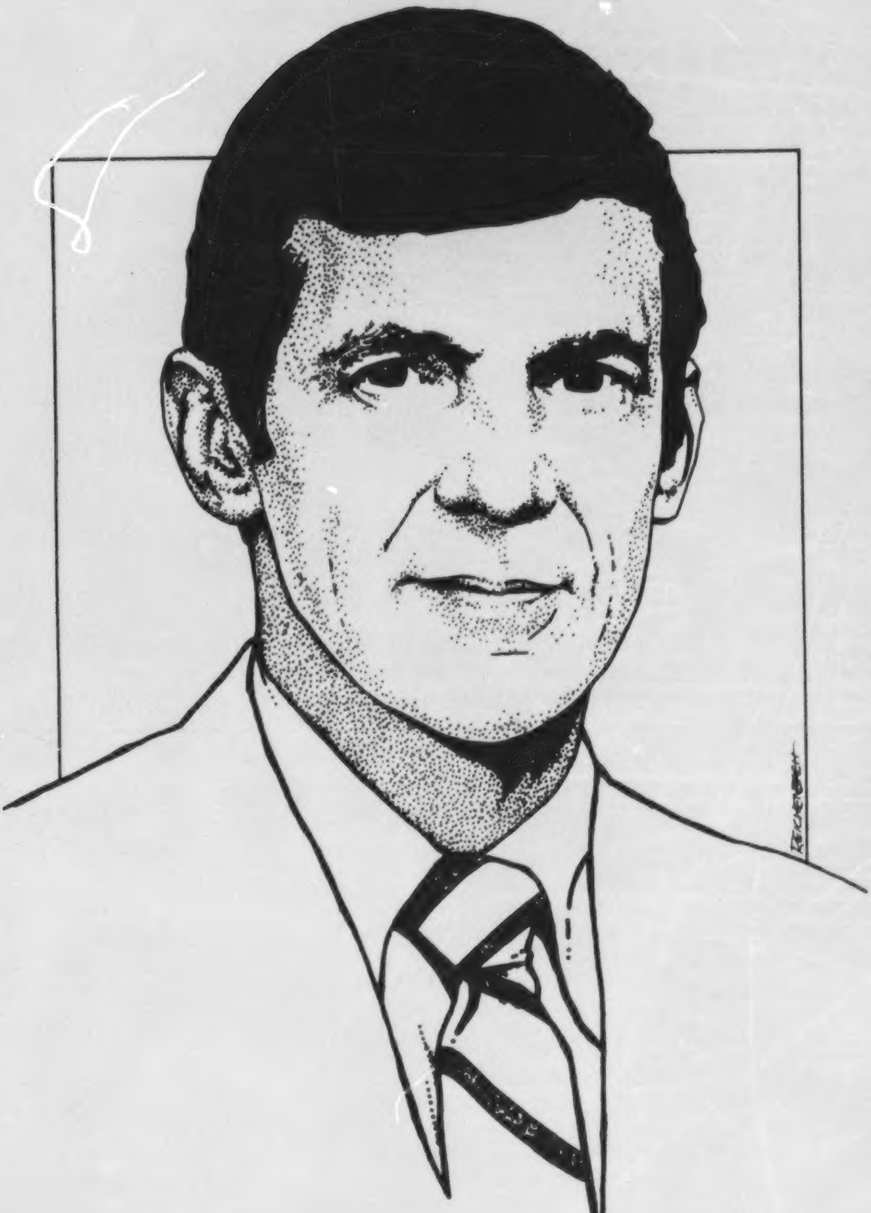
The Education Amendments of 1978 (already adopted by the House and pending in the Senate) contain a provision requiring that NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) establish a system for measuring inequalities in education, both among and within states. The language will require NCES to measure expenditure equality and fiscal neutrality, the two most important standards of education finance equity, as well as to measure variations in the cost of education and in educational need. The data would be essential to the conduct of a three-year national study of educational finance that will also be mandated in the 1978 Amendments. The House version calls for a study to be conducted by the National Institute of Education, while the Senate version calls for a presidentially appointed advisory body to supervise a study. Both House and Senate versions call for a new round of federal payments to reimburse states for the cost of studying educational finance equalization problems. And both House and Senate versions contain language that indicates federal aid will be available to assist states in preparing the needed finance data.

The significance of these financial data must be understood in the context of recent political developments in Washington, D.C. At the insistence of the National Education Association and other groups of educators, the President has proposed and is strongly advocating enactment of legislation establishing a Cabinet-level department of education. While it is not clear whether the Congress will approve such legislation this session, it is almost certain to do so next session. The chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee introduced last year a new general aid to education bill and held hearings to explore how such aid could be allocated. His preferred approach is to use federal funds to equalize educational expenditures among and within states. He and his staff were surprised to learn that there is no standard measurement of inequities in education. His staff was even more surprised to learn at a recent meeting of the School Finance Cooperative that the National Center for Education Statistics is apparently unable at present to obtain uniform finance data for the universe of school districts. A couple years of "preparation" are still required before all states are able to provide strictly comparable data, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

What is needed is not very complicated data—essentially expenditures per-pupil and local property valuation data. These data, after all, are the mother's milk of school finance. In my opinion the executive committee of the Chief State School Officers should reexamine this issue and make clear that its posture is constructive and forward-looking regarding the national interest in monitoring inequities in education finance. If a two-year period is still needed before the new CCD data are available, studies of inequities can still be done by using existing state data, which are *generally* comparable and which are unquestionably adequate for intrastate, longitudinal analyses. This approach is being used by the School Finance Cooperative, under the able leadership of Allan Odden, Director of the Education Finance Center at the Education Commission of the States. A first report is expected late in 1978.

The new politics of education finance are very different from the old politics in terms of the number and variety of individuals and groups that get into the act. It is different in that state-local tax politics are at the heart of the new politics of school finance. It is different in that conflict among interested groups and government agencies is much higher than it used to be, with no reduction in sight. It is different because courts have moved to establish constitutional standards for the vague concepts of equity that have always held a key rhetorical place in the education finance literature. It is different because better trained experts use complicated computers to propose new finance systems.

The President and the Congress and governors and legislators and mayors and minorities and courts and the media and even Howard Jarvis all have a role to play in education finance these days. The quiet days of education finance have slipped into the history books, suitable for an earlier era of American politics, but inadequate as the means to develop, implement, and monitor modern education finance policy. New institutional arrangements in the education finance community have not yet settled into a new equilibrium. More change is yet to come. The informed and tough-minded leadership of state education officials is needed to lead the way to a future that cannot be avoided and that will be very different from the politics of education finance prior to the events of the 1970's.



Chapter VI

Political Issues in Competency Testing

by

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Well, the election is over. We lost. Citizens 35, profession 15.

And our 15 ballots are now being reviewed. We still may lose them—some of them, maybe all of them. The 15 states that do not have minimum competency testing may get it yet—by legislation or by regulation. Commissions, blue ribbon panels, legislative committees are at work in most of the 15—deciding what to do. Those 15 may follow the 35. They often do. One of the 15 got an accountability law this spring, four years late. It may get a minimum competency testing law in 1982, four years late.

Anyhow, 65% of the students—that is how many live in the 35 states—are already required to have minimum competencies for promotion from grade to grade or graduation from high school or both.

How did we lose so fast? Three years ago we did not even know an election would be called; today it is all over, with the polls closed in 35 states.

Maybe we should demand a recount there. Or get them to reopen the polls. We could claim the opposition moved too fast; we were not ready.

Maybe you believe the opposition misled the public; oversimplified the issues; offered instant laws, a quick fix, and—best of all—a cheap solution.

Maybe you believe our side had enough voters but we simply did not get the word out, just did not get our crowd to the polls before they closed.

Maybe you believe it is not too late in the remaining 15 states. They can profit from the mistakes the 35 leaders made. "Leaders" indeed! What kinds of leaders are naive enough to think that minimum competency tests can improve learning? Why get there first with the worst; better to be among the 15.

Maybe you believe if we tell our side of the story to the public—show them how complicated the issues are, show them the great danger and the high cost and the low chance of success, get them interested in learning rather than in testing—then they will help us stop the movement or slow it down or bend it in a positive direction.

Do you believe that? The purpose of this post-election political analysis is to see whether you ought to believe it. The purpose is to see whether you would win next time in the 35, whether you can still win in the 15.

Politics as Power

Political analysis is power analysis. If governance is exercising power, politics is gaining power. We are told that politics is the art of the possible—the skill of gaining while losing. We are told that political science is the science of who gets what—and how they manage to get it.

Either way, whether I am supposed to criticize the art or review the science, I want to answer two questions: 1) how did it happen, and 2) what can you do to stop it or slow it or change it.

How Did It Happen?

First, what happened? Basically, we have three levels of government in education and nothing happened at two of them: local and federal. Everything happened at the state level.

Why? If minimum competency testing sprang from the public—and it did, not from the profession—how in the world did it manage to spring past 17,000 local boards of education, travel like lightning along the national network of state legislators, and roll down with thunder on state boards and state departments?

Local School Governance as a Closed System.

One reason is that the local school district is a relatively closed system, slow to react to public concerns if not actually impervious to them. (That is particularly true when the public is worried about something and the profession is not). We manage to keep local systems closed by separating them from municipal government, electing separate boards of education in non-political and often non-contested elections, having current board members and the superintendents take a hand in who gets elected, persuading board members once elected to act like trustees rather than politicians (listening to public advice but not necessarily taking it), permitting boards to meet privately, and letting the boards set or recommend taxes. The effect of all this activity is to convert the boards from conduits connecting the schools to the community into barriers for isolating them.

Inside the schools we tighten things further by having school administrators work for school boards rather than for mayors, keeping administrators weak, putting teachers on tenure, unionizing teachers, urging teachers to vote in school elections, creating coalitions of teachers and parents, championing academic freedom, and so on. The result is that the profession, not the public, runs the local schools.

State School Governance as a Semi-Open System.

We try to do the same thing at the state level. The problem is that we do not quite have the state legislators under control—or the governors, although they are not a serious problem like the legislators. I suppose if the state board of education levied state school taxes or brought state school tax levies to a public vote—just as they do in most local school districts—we would have everything under control at the state level. But we do not.

While we have a single, largely professional, governing structure for local school districts, we have a double governing structure for state school systems, partly professional and partly public. We have a state legislative branch and a state executive branch inside the education system: the state board and the state superintendent. But we have a state legislative branch and a state executive branch outside the school system as well: the legislature and the governor. We get leadership, regulation, and service from the first; we get laws and money from the second. Of course, the third state branch—the judiciary—is completely outside the school system but it sends a lot of orders into the school system, more and more all the time.

So while local school districts are, say, two-thirds closed to the public, the state school system is, say, two-thirds open to the public. That is why we have minimum competency testing at the state level rather than at the local level. More about that later.

Federal School Governance as an Open System.

But, first, what about educational governance at the federal level? It is wholly open to the public. Well, that overstates it a bit. There is the U.S. Office of Education and the National Institute of Education and the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education and the National Center for Educational Statistics but all four are nested deep inside HEW, which is nested deep inside the general administration of the Presidency. Thus we have no independent executive branch for education. And since we have no federal board of education, we have no independent legislative branch. And since we have no separate federal courts for education, we have no independent judicial branch. In short, the profession controls at best one-half of one-third of the federal governing structure. The rest is under public control.

Then what has prevented public concern about minimum competency testing from being translated into federal action? Well, they have been nibbling at the edges. There was Admiral Rickover's statement to Congress last winter; there was Secretary Califano's testing conference this spring; there was Representative Mottl's bill in this session. But none of those went anywhere. And they will not. Not if the states themselves act rapidly.

The simplest explanation of this activity is that the federal level in education serves as a court of last resort. People go there when they cannot get what they want from the localities or the states. The people who go are the minorities. That figures: if they were the majority, they could get what they wanted by taking local action or, more likely—given the fact that local school districts are relatively closed to public pressures—by taking state action. The landmark events in federal legislation took place when the professionally-governed localities and the semi-professionally-governed states did not give a vocal minority of the public what it wanted.

I do not understand why the federal government has a better ear for minorities than the localities and the states, but it may be the crowning achievement of our federated system of government that it does—that minorities have maximum influence at the highest levels of government. Is it the Constitution? Is it that the President and the Congress and the Supreme Court finally escape their majority constituencies and learn to administer and legislate and judge for all the people, including the minorities?

Landmark Laws as Landmark Minority Triumphs.

Whatever the cause, landmark federal laws are landmark minority triumphs. Take these examples:

- Smith-Hughes in 1917—when the vocational educators and the employers who supported them finally persuaded Congress to take vocational training out of the shops and factories and put it into the schoolhouses—after failing to convince the "general educators" who made up the majority in the localities and the states.
- Brown vs. Topeka in 1954—when the blacks finally persuaded the federal courts that they should go to school with the whites, a point they had failed to make with the majority in many states and most localities.
- The Civil Rights Act in 1964—when the minorities finally convinced the President that it would take more than Brown vs. Topeka to get the majority in many states and localities to follow the Constitution.
- The Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965—when the disadvantaged finally made it clear that compliance laws were not going to be enough—it would take a billion dollars (two billion dollars today) that the majority in the localities would not supply.
- The Education for All Handicapped in 1977—when the parents of the handicapped finally persuaded Congress that the individual differences

among their children were so great that each one required a tailored educational plan, something the local majorities had not supplied.

- The Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act in 1977—when somebody convinced Congress that in the sixty years since 1917 the vocational educators had gone from a minority to a majority and were now neglecting hard-to-educate minority students. Congress agreed that vocational education is too important to leave to the vocational educators and gave another billion dollars to the Department of Labor to do the job—bringing the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program up to more than $8 billion. Minorities do well at the Federal treasury.

The point is that we do not have federal action in minimum competency testing because it is not a minority issue. The states have acted so quickly that no minority has made the trip to Washington. Whoever wanted it, got it at the state capital.

But Why So Fast?

Legislators do not do everything in a hurry; why this? Incidentally, I am shrugging off initiative by state boards of education as nothing more than anticipating legislative action and moving so as not to get pushed. That may be unfair; maybe some state boards, maybe some state superintendents would have adopted minimum competency tests without any legislative pressure whatever. But I doubt it.

Why so fast? Public readiness is one reason; legislative sensitivity is the other.

The public was past ready. And it had more than enough reasons:

- Declining test scores—the College Board Scholastic Aptitude Test, verbal as well as mathematics, scores were dropping, along with scores on many nationally standardized achievement tests, including the National Assessment of Educational Progress, designed specifically as a continuous measure of the nation's intellectual health.
- Complaints from employers that their college-educated secretaries cannot write and that their high school-educated production workers cannot read; nobody, they say, can do arithmetic.
- Steady growth in the ranks of the unemployed, many of them lacking the basic skills needed to learn enough to get a job.
- Students, finally realizing that they were in the 1970s rather than in the 1960s and demanding higher rather than lower standards—in part a majority student backlash in the 1970s against a minority student revolt in the 1960s.
- Lawsuits by unhappy high-school graduates who claimed they could not read the words on their diplomas.

- Colleges—reaching ever deeper into the ability barrel to find more students, recruiting students they would have rejected ten years ago—and complaining about the sludge at the bottom.
- Accumulating proof that compensatory education has not done what we all hoped: narrowed the gap between the disadvantaged and the advantaged.
- A growing sense that the profession now cares more about paychecks than students.
- A creeping suspicion that teachers are not as good as they used to be.
- The early results of the minimum competency tests, which confirmed the worst public fears. Many tests were easy (say 8th grade level, to be generous) and passing scores were low (say 60% correct) but failure rates were high—20%, 40%, even 60% for some groups of students.
- School spending up 50% in the past ten years (and that is after discounting for inflation). Paying more but getting less makes anybody restless—even angry.

Legislators were quite sensitive. And they had excellent reasons:

- Education laws affect everybody: 40% of the people are engaged in education and the other 60% help pay for it.
- Money for education makes up most of the state budget.
- Legislators are younger and better educated than in prior years. And they are every bit as competitive and ambitious. Society changes rapidly; social issues come and go quickly; legislators must stay alert, spot issues early, take visible positions, and push their ideas fast if they want credit.
- Legislators who want to move from the state capital to Washington need to win statewide recognition. A minimum competency testing bill can make a legislator famous outside his or her own district.
- Colleges petition legislators for money to finance remedial courses in the basic skills. Legislators think they paid for that once already.
- Teachers are electing more legislators. Result: legislators know more about teaching and care more about it. According to one teacher:

> *"About one-fifth of my students did not know how to read . . . these students were high school seniors . . . I asked some senior faculty members what I should do. They explained that if a student came to class and was not disruptive, he or she was to receive a passing grade . . . I went along with that system, but I always felt we were doing a tremendous disservice to those youngsters."*

That teacher is named Gary K. Hart. He got himself elected to the California legislature and wrote the law which set up minimum competency testing in that state.

- It was an easy step from accountability to minimum competency tests. The accountability laws had not worked. They only barked; minimum competency tests would bite.

- Many states pay for compensatory education programs, paralleling ESEA Title I. Maybe minimum competency testing would make compensatory education work.

In short, a ready public combined with a sensitive legislature set up the conditions for a storm of activity in the state capitals. The clouds had been gathering for a long time. The lightning struck first in Oregon, flashed across the nation, and the clouds broke everywhere.

How Can It Be Stopped or Slowed or Changed?

Suppose you wanted to build a political coalition to stop minimum competency testing in your state. Or to roll it back. Or to slow it down in order to buy time. Or to shift the concern from high-school graduation to early remediation or from testing to teaching. Where could you turn for help?

Last week I telephoned some of the key national associations and asked their latest position on minimum competency testing. some had an official view; many of those that did not were working on one.

I will tell you where they stand. You decide how many votes their members in your state could deliver in your state legislature or how many minds they could change on your state board.

Their positions range from flat opposition to qualified support.

Negative.

There are three organizations whose members you can count on to oppose minimum competency testing—to oppose national tests, at least. Here's what they say.

- National Education Association

  —State-mandated standards for education should set no more than broad, general curricular guidelines and should not be based on student achievement.

  —The use of equivalency tests, in lieu of academic preparation and school attendance, for meeting requirements for graduation with age as the sole criterion for eligibility should be strongly resisted.

  —Standardized tests which are used to test performance levels as a criterion for high-school graduation should be eliminated.

- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

  We strongly oppose national testing. National competency testing is a bogus solution.

- National Congress of Parents and Teachers
  We oppose federally mandated standards of student performance and we oppose federally prescribed and imposed measurements.

Uncommitted.

There are six organizations which are undecided but are thinking it over and may soon take a position. You could wait and hope they will turn against minimum competency testing, or you might try to persuade them.

- American Association of School Administrators
  AASA recognizes the limitations of currently used intelligence and achievement types of standardized testing procedures. AASA therefore urges its members to:
  1. Point out the strengths and weaknesses of standardized tests to their constituency and what can prevent their misuse;
  2. Disseminate the results of investigations of the Scholastic Aptitude Tests and the American College Tests;
  3. Eliminate simplistic comparisons of schools on the basis of test results within and among school districts and states;
  4. Work for the development of viable individually-based alternatives such as criterion-referenced tests.
- American Federation of Teachers
  AFT has no official position on minimum competency testing but is currently developing one.
- American Personnel and Guidance Association
  APGA has no official position on minimum competency testing.
- National Council on Measurement in Education
  NCME has no official position on minimum competency testing.
- National School Boards Association
  NSBA has no official position on minimum competency testing but is currently developing its viewpoint.
- National Council for Citizens in Education
  NCCE has no official position on minimum competency testing but is developing an information booklet for parents dealing with the topic.

Qualified Positive.

There are four organizations whose members actually favor minimum competency testing—with reservations. You could wait and hope their reservations would overcome their endorsement, or you might try to change their minds.

- National Association of Secondary School Principals
  Measuring student competency requires two different approaches:
  1. *Use competency tests to measure*
     - functional literacy in reading, writing and speaking
     - ability to compute, including decimals and percentages
     - U.S. history and government knowledge
  2. *Use units or credits to measure*
     - successful completion of units or courses equal to a regular course load extending to the first semester of the senior year
     - sufficient attendance in programs to gain fully the educational and social benefits of group situations

- National Association of Elementary School Principals

  NAESP supports the assessment of children to determine their attainment of minimal standards at the local school district level, but opposes state and national mandated competency based testing.

- Council for Basic Education

  —Clear standards of achievement should be used to measure each student's progress and to govern promotion to each next level of the educational system.

  —CBE favors competency testing as the most productive thing schools are doing today—but not national competency testing.

  —Some states are doing a good job; others are moving too fast, requiring too many competencies, mandating "survival skills" rather than limiting themselves to basic skills.

One pattern I found in making this survey is that most associations cannot write plain English. A newspaper reporter could find few clear sentences telling the public what we think. Another pattern is that most professional organizations have not developed a position on minimum competency testing, even though it is underway in 35 states. The professional associations are late. They are tilted against minimum competency testing and we see that that has not been enough to stop the movement. Another pattern is that no citizens' organization—one totally independent of education—has taken a negative position. Clearly, minimum competency testing is a citizens' movement which the profession has not been able to stop and has scarcely been able to slow down.

It would be difficult to form a successful political coalition powerful enough to affect minimum competency testing in the upcoming state legislative sessions.

Now, I said *suppose* you wanted to stop it or slow it or change it. Maybe you do not. Let us look at *your* official position.

- Council of Chief State School Officers

  —Competencies mastered by students are as important as the accumulation of credits, diplomas, or degrees. While these traditional measures of achievement represent one indicator of competence, they should not be considered conclusive or all inclusive.

  —The identification and definition of appropriate competencies and the methodologies leading to them are difficult. The Council urges state education agencies to accelerate their progress toward:

  1. Defining relevant competencies;
  2. Improving methods to obtain and measure competencies;
  3. Granting appropriate educational equivalency credits.

Well, now. Perhaps you are not against it. Perhaps you stand halfway between the parties—translating, mediating. You have to understand both the citizens and the profession. We have been talking about the profession. Let us have another look at the citizens.

Understanding Public Preferences

Recently, I visited a place where a group of high school teachers had made two minimum competency tests for the end of tenth grade: one in English the other in mathematics. Any student who failed would get remediation, possibly two years of it, and possibly no diploma—good reason for the teachers to make the tests fairly easy and good reason for the students to try fairly hard.

I saw the tests and would say they were about fifth grade—long division, spell "separate", things like that—with a passing score of 60%. Not very hard. About 25% of the tenth graders flunked the English; about 50% flunked the math.

Retaining 3% of the Students.

I talked with the teachers and principals afterward:

"Suppose remediation does not work," I said. "Students have not learned it in five years and may not in two more. Then what? How many diplomas can you withhold at commencement—as many as 10%?"

"Of course not! Parents would not stand for it. The Board, the administration, and the faculty would cave in under the pressure," they said.

"Then how many diplomas can you refuse? How about 5%," I said.

"Make that 3%," they said.

"All right, 3%. Then 97% *have* to pass the minimum competency tests. What can you teachers and principals *guarantee*—not wish—that 97% of all graduates can do?" I said.

"Guarantee? Really *guarantee* for 97%? Well, first grade work; maybe second grade—if you mean a guaranteed minimum," they said.

"Won't that be embarrassing to the school?" I said. "Second grade work?"

"Not as embarrassing as withholding 10% of the diplomas," they said.

I knew they were right. Well, I knew it until last Friday.

Retaining 10% of the Students.

That is the day I was talking to a county superintendent—one-third of a county, actually. He told me what he had done in June. Held back 10% of his students K-12, mostly because they could not pass the state's minimum competency tests.

"How many did you hold back last year?"

"2%."

"You went from 2% to 10% in one year?"

"Yep."

"What did the parents say?"

"Just a few complained—not what you would expect."

Not what I would expect. He was right. I was wrong. So was that place I visited. When Chicago did it last year, I shrugged it off—hold back 2,000 kids at one grade in a huge city—drop in the bucket. But I never expected 10% K-12 with minority failures 500% out of proportion.

"One more question. How many of those you flunked were minorities?"

"55%."

"The county mostly minority?"

"Only 10%."

"The county is 10% minority and the kids you held back were over 50% minority?"

"Yep."

"Why did minority parents put up with that?"

"Figured it would force the schools to bring their kids up to standards," he said.

Think about that if you were planning to arouse minorities against minimum competency testing.

Should Anything Cost a Student a Diploma?

Of course, they were not withholding high-school diplomas in that county. Could they? Should they? We asked that question in a town two thousand miles from there earlier this spring. Asked 1,000 citizens and

500 recent graduates and high-school students and all the teachers whether anything—and we gave them a list of 167 things—was important enough to cost a student a high-school diploma. They scratched 154 off the list and left 13 on it—13 things a combined majority of citizens and graduates and students and teachers said a student must do—or no diploma. Here they are; in rank order:

Did they mean it? They made us believe it during our in-depth interviews. Take the high-school students. They said things like:

> *"It's not fair for teachers to send us on from grade to grade when we cannot do the work. They are not doing us any favors."*
>
> *"It is embarrassing to be in a class you cannot keep up with because you were not well prepared."*
>
> *"If I did not get my diploma because I did not pass a competency test, I would understand—if they had given me plenty of warning. That is only fair."*
>
> *"Maybe you should have a competency test to get out of elementary and middle school, too—to catch problems there. Don't wait till high school when it's too late."*

That was the students talking. It could have been the citizens: they sounded the same.

How Would Citizens Spend a $1,000 on schools? Just to be sure, we asked them to do it all over again by putting their money where their values were—play money, it was; we gave them $1,000 each to spend the way they wanted the school to spend it. Then we put 14 things on the counter and let them buy as much or as little as they wanted.

If they had been blindfolded—or if they had not had preferences—they would have bought $70 worth of each one. They did not. The citizens spent $400 on basic skills; $115 on career education; $25 on fine arts. Let me say that again. They spent 40% on basic skills, 10% on career education, and less than 6% on anything else.

We told the superintendent: when you give the taxpayers the bill for the school year, it had better look like this table:

Does the Public Expect the Schools To Do It All? We like to say, "The public wants the schools to do everything." Wrong, They want us to do *some* things; they want to do the others themselves. We found that out by asking the citizens in our study to split what is important for *students to learn* from what is important for *schools to teach.* They made a clear split. Moral education, for example, hit the top of the student learning list and the bottom of the school teaching list.

There are certain things the schools should *depend on the citizens* to do. Heading that list are *family living, morals, values,* and *ethics.*

There are other things the citizens *depend on the schools* to do. Heading that list are teaching *basic skills, citizenship,* and *thinking.*

The schools can reasonably complain if the citizens fail to do the first. The citizens can reasonably complain if the schools fail to do the second. They are complaining.

I never understood that when I was a local administrator. I had no priorities and was proud of it. The band, the youth center, foreign languages, sports, science, health, kindergarten—I loved them all equally. You are the most important, I told them all, just as I had been taught in administration classes.

Oh, I knew a fraction of the public did not agree. We administrators knew there were conservatives out there in the community, hard-shelled, narrow-minded people who thought the whole alphabet consisted of 3 r's. But we surrounded ourselves with the PTA and marched on.

In later years I found that same minority in other communities. Every superintendent I met said: "You would not believe some of the diehards we have in this town. But we have good schools in spite of them."

Today I wonder whether that minority is not actually a majority—at least when it comes to minimum competencies for promotion or graduation.

They do seem to have the votes.

Another Little Cloud

And they may have another idea besides minimum competency testing. I saw another cloud on the horizon last week—little cloud, no bigger than this newspaper clipping:

> ALBANY, July 28—The vice-chancellor of the State Board of Regents recommended today that minimum competency standards be developed for teachers to insure that they were doing a proper job in the classroom.
>
> The suggestion came a day after the Regents passed strict new test standards for high-school graduation. "It would seem only fair that if we've mandated tests for children, we should have them for teachers as well," said the vice chancellor, Willard A. Genrich of Buffalo.
>
> As a first step toward testing teachers statewide, Mr. Genrich suggested that teachers take the minimum competency test designed for students. "If they can't pass it, they should not be allowed to teach it," he said.
>
> "How about minimum competency tests for members of the Board of Regents?" asked Edwin J. Robisch, the president of the New York Educators Association. His parent group, The National Educational Association, is opposed to competency testing for students as well as teachers.
>
> The notion of giving teachers a test designed for students recalled a recent incident in Dallas in which 535 new classroom teachers took a competency examination designed to test the academic ability of high school students.
>
> More than half the teachers failed.

That's a New York newspaper spreading the bad news from Texas. They are already talking about it in your state. Just a little cloud. No lightning. Yet.

What a Majority of the People in One Community Would Require of a Student for High-School Graduation

13 Objectives Chosen from 167
Basic Skills
Computes, accurately (adds, subtracts, multiplies, and divides)
Knows the fundamentals of mathematics
Writes correctly (grammar, punctuation, and capitalization)
Speaks correctly (proper grammar and good usage)
Spells correctly
Solves mathematical problems in practical situations
Reads to learn
Can follow directions, both written and verbal
Can organize and present his/her ideas and information effectively in written form
Citizenship and Political Understanding
Knows American history
Knows laws and regulations governing citizens' behavior
Can describe the structure, functions, and relationships of local, state, and Federal governments
Career Education and Occupational Competence
Knows how to get a job by seeking job openings, writing a resume, completing an application, and participating in a job interview

© *Who Would Require Objective for Graduation*

Average* N = 1455**	Students N = 244	Graduates N = 175	Teachers N = 107	Residents N = 929
96%	92%	96%	96%	98%
94	90	94	95	97
84	78	88	82	89
81	76	88	72	89
77	79	84	63	82
77	65	78	88	77
73	64	73	72	83
68	59	68	71	76
62	47	69	68	66
70	64	66	68	81
62	61	57	70	62
54	45	51	60	62
56	47	62	63	54

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*Average *not* weighted for *size* of population: one *population* = one vote.

**N = number of people answering.

How the People in One Community Spent $1,000 in 14 Goal Areas

Goal Area
Basic Skills
Career Education & Occupational Competence
Mental & Physical Health
Creative, Constructive & Critical Thinking
Economic Understanding
Human Relations
Self-Realization
Family Living
Citizenship & Political Understanding
Values & Ethics
Physical Environment
Fine Arts
Lifelong Learning
Moral Education

	Amount Spent				
	*Average** *N = 1435***	*Students* *N = 244*	*Graduates* *N = 175*	*Teachers* *N = 107*	*Residents* *N = 929*
	$328	$246	$318	$357	$390
	102	120	92	81	114
	64	77	72	59	46
	60	54	62	66	53
	54	74	52	39	49
	54	56	55	56	49
	51	46	68	54	36
	48	56	48	46	42
	45	45	38	51	46
	44	38	50	41	46
	41	56	36	44	28
	40	62	36	37	26
	36	33	46	31	33
	32	33	28	32	36

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*Average *not* weighted for *size* of population: one *population* = one vote.

**N = number of people answering.

Chapter VII

Political Issues in Vocational/Career Education

by

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There are few, if any, programs and activities that deserve the attention of the Council of Chief State School Officers and other education and political organizations more than those of vocational and career education. Federal and state expenditures continue to multiply in both areas. The number of programs and activities at the federal and state levels in both vocational and career education have increased dramatically over the past several years, and new policies and legislation at federal and state levels are now being considered that should ensure the efficient implementation and maintenance of vocational and career education. These programs extend far beyond the traditional domain of educators. In fact, much of the leadership extending the impact of vocational and career education has come from the business, industry and labor communities. Further successes of these programs will involve concessions, compromise and consensus-seeking activities on the part of leaders both inside and outside education.

Broadly defined, political issues in education include all points of debate, past and present, that are related to the conduct of government as distinguished from the day-to-day administration or implementation of education policies or programs. Education issues are matters of concern to all who make education decisions, including chief state school officers, state boards of education, state higher education officers and other leaders.

However, day-to-day administrative matters relating to finance, governance and evaluation also take place within a political context. Even the implementation of education programs can have enormous political significance at federal, state and local levels. Carol Weiss (1975) accurately pointed to the significance of political considerations for many education endeavors, whether one is engaged in the processes of education finance, governance, evaluation or any number of other education activities that are sometimes considered to be primarily the domain of education practitioners. Commenting on evaluation, Weiss said:

> *Political considerations intrude in three major ways, and the evaluator who fails to recognize their presence is in for a series of shocks and frustrations. First, the policies and programs with which evaluation deals are the creature of political decisions. They were proposed, defined, debated, enacted and funded through political processes; and in implementation they remain subject to pressures, both supportive and hostile, which arise out of the play of politics. Second, because evaluation is undertaken in order to feed into decision-making, its reports enter the political arena. There, evaluative evidence of program outcomes has to compete for attention with other factors that carry weight in the political process. Third, and perhaps least recognized, evaluation itself has a political stance. By its very nature it makes implicit political statements about such issues as the problematic nature of some programs and the unassailableness of others, the legitimacy of program goals, the legitimacy of program strategies, the utility of strategies of incremental reform and even the appropriate role of the social scientist in policy and program formation.*

One need only note the theme of this conference or the assigned topics to realize that this group views education as a political enterprise or at least as an instrumentality of the political process. However, while most educators probably realize that there are political constraints and resistances associated with education program implementation and administration, many have failed over the years to accept the idea that most education programs are not clear-cut and separate entities, but emerge as a result of decisions, made not only by educators but others and are affected by political support, opposition or compromise. The truth is that the majority of programs are molded by interaction among political and education decisionmakers, collective bargaining and consensus-seeking, in which a variety of vested interests are inevitably served. In short, most education programs are creatures of legislative and bureaucratic politics.

Over the years, we have tried to solve social problems through education. We have feared that institutions such as family and community are adversely affected by various forces in our culture and do not provide the direction and resources needed to overcome problems created by such factors as poverty, crime, unemployment or the alienation of our culture's youth. If, for example, changes in business, industry or labor or overall technological changes leave youth with fewer ways of acquiring new skills or finding jobs, many persons will look to the schools for needed answers.

Without question, such conditions have influenced the development of vocational education programs, testing practices, the initiation of special programs and more recently, efforts to link careers with formal education. But our long-standing romance with schooling appears to be on the wane and in recent years there has been increased dissatisfaction with education expressed by parents, students, politicians, members of the business/education/labor communities and even educators. Perhaps this expressed discontent with general education is one of the main reasons why there has been such strong interest in vocational education programs and in the emergence of career education as a means of educational reform. Certainly, vocational education in the 1970's differs significantly from the programs initiatied more than 50 years ago. Contemporary vocational education programs are more varied in content; they teach many more occupational skills and seek to include students who in the past were not in large numbers part of the vocational community (e.g., disadvantaged, handicapped, minorities and others).

The principal changes in vocational education, of course, have to do with goals and objectives. While the major objective may still be to prepare persons for work in order to meet the needs of the economy, a second objective which became clear in the 1960's was to expand each person's employment options. This objective is equally true in the case of career education. Vocational education is concerned more than ever before with developing flexible occupations, goals and opportunities so that all students have available choices after they graduate or exit from school, whether at secondary or postsecondary levels. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that both vocational education and career education purport to improve the development of basic academic skills. These changes in vocational education, confusion about what is and what is not career education and the similarities and differences between the two have given rise to many of the contemporary political issues in vocational and career education.

Definitional Issues

Since the term, career education, was first introduced and funded under the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments, there has been confusion regarding the differences and similarities between vocational education and career education. It is particularly important that these differences and similarities be delineated, if we are to understand the various political issues. Kenneth Hoyt (1978) has done an excellent job in differentiating between the two. He writes:

> *First, while both vocational education and career education represent means used to attain the goal of education as preparation for work, they do so in quite different ways. Vocational education represents a body of substantive knowledge designed to provide students with specific vocational skills necessary for* entry *into the occupational society. Career education's main thrust is on providing students with skills and attitudes necessary for changing with change in the occupational society including: (a)*

basic academic skills; (b) decision-making, job-seeking, and job-holding skills; and (c) good work habits and a personally meaningful set of work values.

Second, while vocational education, by definition, represents an instructional program designed to meet the needs of a segment of the student body at the secondary and postsecondary, sub-baccalaureate level, career education represents an effort designed to be threaded through all *instructional programs at* all *levels of education—from the early elementary school years through the college/university and adult education system. Vocational education is defined in terms of courses and is an instructional program. Career education is defined as a systemwide effort, but not in terms of courses or instructional programs.*

Third, vocational education concerns itself, as presently structured, almost entirely with the world of paid employment. Career education, on the other hand, is concerned about both paid and unpaid work.

Fourth, vocational education, as an instructional program, is something taught by persons called "vocational educators." Career education, as a systemwide effort, is something that hopefully will be taught, through a threading/weaving process, by all *educators, not by a special kind of teacher called a "career educator."*

Fifth, while vocational education concentrates its efforts on specific vocational skills, career education seeks to add an emphasis on the importance of general career skills gained through the so-called "academic disciplines." For example, career education emphasizes the importance of communications skills, critical thinking skills, logical reasoning skills, and competitive skills as ones that are useful in advancing in a very wide array of occupations.

Career education and vocational education, then, represent different approaches toward the ultimate attainment of the goal of education as preparation for work. Vocational educators, however, can and do engage in career education. They obviously have advocated career education concepts for many years, long before career education was first introduced. Their basic differences should not lead one to assume that there are no similarities or that ther is no relationship between vocational and career education.

Another difficulty is that large numbers of persons tend to think of vocational education as it was before the 1960's, when emphasis was basically on preparing people to work or in specific occupations (to meet the needs of the economy), not necessarily to increase employment options. Also, many lay persons have never heard the term career education, or at least tend to confuse it with vocational education because of the emphasis on education and work relations. Despite this confusion, both vocational education and career education continue to be growing forces in American education and have received strong support at federal, state and local levels and are viewed as important means of education reform by organized labor, business and industry and any number of individual educators who are concerned with improving educational practices in public and private schools.

Issues Involving Interrelationships of Programs

Since the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, vocational education has been the only viable alternative to academic instruction that has existed within the education system. The same political issues surround vocational education that surround other educational concerns (e.g., federal involvement, finance, evaluation/assessment, etc.).

To the general public vocational education often appears to be another federally funded program. Yet in most states the federal government contributes less than 20 percent of the total amount spent on vocational education. But, at the same time, federal legislation is very prescriptive about the shape all vocational education programs should take in the future—not so much about content but about what clientele vocational education should serve and whom vocational education leaders should consult with in order to plan effective programs.

Some people at the state and local levels resist the federal evaluation requirements, feeling that these requirements determine policies rather than evaluating programs. Yet the move to account for federal dollars spent will increase in the future, rather than decrease, and evaluation has become a part of that accountability effort. State and local vocational educators are not opposed to evaluation as such, only to too many requests for too many different kinds of things. Since vocational education programs are supposed to be founded on local philosophies, goals and objectives, vocational educational education teachers and administrators often do not want their programs standardized, or compared within an institution or from one institution to another.

Despite federal legislation, the quality and scope of vocational education continues to vary from state to state and from school to school. This variety is in response to state and local needs and in large part, the extent and efficiency of the programs depends on the amount of commitment of the state and local people to vocational education and the image, status and profile that vocational education presents therein.

In many areas and at various times, vocational education has lacked prestige. It appears that as career education is more fully implemented, more students may choose vocational education programs, since practical job-oriented training may seem more appropriate and desirable.

Since the early 1960's, both vocational education and federal manpower programs have been mandated to prepare the disadvantaged for the labor force. It is widely felt that if people are to get out of the poverty cycle to stay, they must be provided with some kind of training, then placed in jobs. CETA has generally provided short-term or on-the-job training situations, while vocational education training has tended to be more in-depth and longer term. Many vocational education and manpower or CETA programs have naturally carved out their own areas or territories, but recent legislation has mandated that they work more closely together. Such mandates, to cooperate, are initially threatening to both, although in the long run the benefits for students, clients and administrators could be substantial.

If vocational education and CETA accept one another, they should be able to work together towards the same end—providing this country with a well-trained, but not over-trained, flexible labor force. High schools may need to work out standards and grant credit for training received in CETA programs. Vocational schools may be able to offer more actual training programs to CETA clients. And together, vocational schools and CETA programs may want to work more closely with business and industry to train students and clients in actual business settings. Business could provide modern equipment and facilities, while the vocational education program provides instructors. Costs could be underwritten by CETA and vocational education money. This particular training scheme brings up the vital need for collaboration among business, industry, education and government, which we will address further later on.

If through cooperation between themselves and the business community, CETA and vocational education can get a more accurate appraisal of the job market now and in the near future, then they might be able to provide training that reflects realistic job opportunities. Many students, clients and school and program administrators have not known enough to recognize that much of the information they were initially given—if they were given any—or information that they may have stumbled upon, was inaccurate, out-of-date or incomplete. The economics of unemployment and underemployment could finally force them to demand nothing less than the best occupational information that can be developed or assembled. Meanwhile, Congress is mandating state occupational information coordinating committees and the formation and use of advisory committees in the hope of improving the information base for planning, services and training.

Because vocational education must now work closely with CETA, most issues that affect one now affect the other. Such things as welfare reform, "workfare projects" (work to get food stamps), total employment bills, job creation efforts like public service employment, anything else that affects employment in this country and the need for a trained labor force—all have direct implications for vocational education.

There is debate within the vocational education community and among career educators as to whether they should play an advocacy role with regard to many socio-political issues such as discriminatory hiring practices and unsatisfactory and hazardous working conditions. While deciding whether or not to take a leading role, Congress has legislated that vocational education programs must respond to the handicapped, women and minorities. Many vocational education programs have long been stereotyped as male and female Simply encouraging high school boys to come into the home economics programs or girls to study agriculture, will not likely be successful. The attitudes toward these programs are well ingrained by that age and work must start at the primary level—where career education can help open some of those doors. Student demand does affect program offerings at the local level. Even though many students are prepared, few are knowledgeable enough to make program choices. They may continue for several years more to make choices that make vocational education programs appear both racist and sexist. Consequently, significant changes may be some time in coming.

Our changing economy demands that more students have vocational skills, career decision-making skills and a work attitude in order to make a successful transition from school to work. What impact does vocational education have on youth unemployment? Should it be delaying youth entry into the labor market by making their education more relevant and keeping them in school? Cooperative work programs are expanding, allowing two or three students to share a job and go to school part-time. Such things demand community, business and labor cooperation so that labor is not threatened by "kids taking jobs away from them," and business sees the important contributions they are making to the community.

In addition to training youth, vocational education must also begin to respond more fully to the continuing and recurrent education and training needs of adults. Technological changes and increasing older populations demand innovative approaches to education and training and increased job development activities. A new clientele for vocation al education simply cannot be ignored, if vocational education, and for that matter career education, is to continue to prosper and grow.

Finance is, of course, a political issue affecting vocational education and career education. There are often long delays before federal appropriations are made, thus making it difficult to plan ahead. Sometimes there are mandates to do certain things and no appropriations to carry them out. Things like tuition tax credits may encourage more students to attend proprietary rather than public vocational education schools (e.g., proprietary schools are sometimes able to offer programs that are more quickly responsive to changes in our local or national economy and that have more modern equipment and methods).

Vocational education is sometimes viewed as a stepchild of both education and federal manpower development programs. As such, it is affected by both types of political issues as well as some peculiar to vocational education. In one sense, when the economy is cooking, the political issues affecting things like vocational education seem relatively simple. But when unemployment rises and a segment of society becomes chronically unemployed, conflicts and complexities appear. There are many voters to satisfy, and it is understood that more people in this country want everyone to work, though perhaps for different reasons. There are special interest groups who want training and jobs for their members so that they too can have a piece of the pie, and there are many workers who do not want to support people on welfare. But at the same time, many of the same people want to cut government spending. Thus, the political issues become more complex.

While the issues have changed somewhat in vocational education, career education and CETA, there is today a strengthened commitment to both programs that is more than just an outgrowth of the past. Recent high rates of unemployment that led to the establishment of CETA have also highlighted the need for expanded vocational education and career education programs in our schools. CETA to some, for all of its strengths and virtues, creates an artificial employment structure in our economy that affects the conditions in the marketplace. Also because of its emphasis on placing persons in jobs, its training programs do not, in the opinions of many, provide the indepth education so essential to the individual's later adaptation in the job market. The essential issue here is whether vocational education or career education in school settings is a better solution to unemployment problems than CETA. A second issue is how the CETA program, which is admittedly a means of dealing with the immediate short-term employment problems that face us today, can be linked in productive ways with vocational education and career education programs to provide more relevant education opportunities for young adults.

Other questions come to mind that primarily involve the relationship between vocational education and career education. The new Career Education Incentive Act (PL 95-207) should hasten the implementation of career education programs in schools across the country. If vocational educators link their programs to the ongoing career education efforts, results could be a student population that is increasingly able to find employment and to adapt to changing conditions of the marketplace. Can these goals be accomplished? Are resources available for reaching these objectives? What are the implications for school finance—or governance at the state level and for program implementation?

Continuity between Elementary/Secondary and Postsecondary Education

Program continuity among various levels of education is an issue that has perplexed both educators and the lay public for years. As an issue, it has been raised by those concerned with teacher education; the education of special populations (including the handicapped, gifted and talented, and minorities) as well as those concerned with such basic issues as accreditation, credentialing, basic skills and continuity of learning experience in various areas of specialization, particularly as related to the goals and objectives of medicine, law and other professional programs. In both vocational education and career education there has been a tendency to view programs at elementary/secondary levels as having little to do with the activities in higher education, despite the fact that many of the most significant programs in vocational education have for years been conducted at postsecondary levels, particularly in community colleges and proprietary schools. Career education especially has yet to influence postsecondary education in major ways. There is a whole series of issues that involve faculty and student awareness, basic differences between elementary/secondary education and postsecondary education in regard to program development, implementation and support, and the financing of programs.

These and other issues must now be addressed if these differences are to be reconciled. True, many of these issues are the same for other programs in which strength and relationships between elementary/secondary education and postsecondary are goals. But nowhere is it more important than in vocational/career education to begin to resolve some of these differences.

Collaboration Issues

There are, of course, many other political issues common to vocational education and career education. Virtually everyone feels that career education cannot be implemented without increased participation of business, industry and labor. Hundreds of articles, monographs and papers have been published concerning business/industry/education relations since 1970, and most of them support this idea. Where states and local districts have sought the support of business, industry and labor in implementing their programs, they have moved far ahead of those that have not. Collaboration of business, industry, education and labor is equally important to the continued success of vocational education. But who should take the lead in planning for strengthened cooperation? Education talks to education; business talks to business; government talks to government, and the interaction of these institutions on a systematic basis is not widespread.

Persons who are aware of the political significance of bringing together those who have vested interest in education can bring about an alliance that is beneficial for all. The key to solving problems associated with this dilemma and overcoming the barriers to increased cooperation, centers on the ability of these groups to communicate on topics where disagreements occur. Important factors in effective communications include such things as:

1. All parties must know what collaborative efforts can accomplish.
2. Proposed levels and types of collaborative activities must be prioritized as to their significance for various discussions.
3. Objectives and proposed outcomes must be mutually agreed upon.

Even more basic is whether or not the interests of education, business, industry and labor are, in fact, compatible. Without question, the interests of education and all other parties must be served. Involved are negotiations, compromise and a recognition that vested interest groups cannot achieve their objectives without a clear understanding of alternatives that may strengthen or decrease existing cooperative efforts.

A related point of debate has to do with whether institutionalized educational offerings in vocational education or career education can be coordinated with various opportunities that now exist for work and employment. Earlier, I mentioned that there now appears to be a crisis in education, dissatisfaction with formal education as it now exists at most levels and a failing confidence in education in general. One has only to review the newspaper articles or watch the evening news on television in order to get a feel for the loss of prestige of education (or at least educators) among the American public. Education should collaborate generally with vocationally and professionally-oriented training interests, whenever and wherever appropriate, but the various systems of education often tend to separate training programs from the realities of earning a living and becoming a part of this nation's workforce. This issue, of course, involves questions of finance, public versus private education and the traditional role of the university or community college.

At the 1976 annual meeting of the Education Commission of the States, six specific problem areas were identified that bear directly on the politics of vocational education and career education. These are representative of the concerns of decision-makers who are motivated to identify problems and seek alternative solutions. At this meeting the groups were composed of general educators, career education specialists, representatives of vocational education, legislators, governors or their representatives, and people in business and industry who represent various education/political organizations. Topics for discussion included:

1. **The role of the school.** Society often expects the schools to do the entire job of preparing people for the world of work. Despite the emphasis of career education on the importance of wide community involvement in education decision-making at both policy and implementation levels, there continues to be a major segment of society that is insistent on charging schools with the major tasks of preparing persons for work, and see no role for other institutions.

2. Preparation for work. There is little agreement as to what skills, attitudes and experience best prepare persons for work and living. Closely related to this problem is a persistent tendency for many to communicate only with others who have similar responsibilities. There are at least two additional considerations that relate to the disagreement as to what skills, attitudes and experience prepare persons for employment and for life in general. First, schools still have relatively ineffective mechanisms for involving parents, business persons, employers and other community members in education decision-making, particularly at the state level. Second, there is inadequate information prepared for use by the community to interpret the relationship of acquired skills, attitudes and experiences that lead to satisfaction and productivity in work and living.

3. Educational emphasis. Schools tend to emphasize either career learning or liberal arts rather than a blend or infusion of the two. This dichotomy is significant for both vocational education and career education. Despite continued insistence that career education is not a separate program or curriculum, there are those who insist that liberal arts, special education, vocational education and professional education are separate tracks that have little to do with each other, that all aspects of schooling at all levels as an integrated part of career education is not yet fully accepted. It is certainly more than an attitudinal problem; it is both a philosophical and practical issue that constitutes a potential barrier for strengthening collaborative efforts among concerned parties.

4. Opportunities for developing new skills and attitudes. There may be a number of opportunities for developing new skills or even attitudes, but there are various constraints and barriers to change. For example, the lack of awareness of opportunities that may exist or the failure of schools and other institutions to foster continuity between formal education and pre-occupation endeavors as well as continuing education remain a concern.

5. Finance. Few would argue that our schools should do more to combine educational experiences with work. It is clear that most educational institutions face a financial crisis and providing more money may or may not be the answer. Some suggest that a more efficient reallocation of economic resources may at least be as important. For many persons the question of more money is not the central issue. At least as important may be the need to restructure education along the lines of career education concepts.

6. Identification of problems. Our society has a tendency to launch efforts towards solving problems of careers and life preparedness before problems are carefully identified and defined, and this problem is certainly not limited to career education or vocational education. In the past we have attempted to solve problems with inadequate information, poor communications and negative attitudes. Problem issues must be better delineated.

There are a variety of other more specific issues, all potentially political, that are unsettled and important for state and local level decision-making that have implications for both vocational education and career education. Some are more important for one program than for another. Most have to do with collaboration and vary considerably from state to state and from region to region, depending on any number of economic, legal, geographic or demographic factors.

1. **Participation by business, industry and labor in state and local career education efforts is not always sought in the beginning.** This issue is very serious. If these communities are important members of the career education team and are part of the education/political process (as are all other community groups), then they must participate in the formulation of policies and the development of laws. It is unlikely that business, industry and labor communities will feel the same degree of commitment, reach consensus with educators and fully participate with schools in promoting career education, if their support is not invited through all phases of policy-making until programs are ready to be implemented. Some career education advocates are divided on this key problem.

2. **Certification requirements and credentialing.** This process is an often mentioned barrier to improved relations among business, industry, labor, education and government, and is not limited to career education or vocational education, but is currently one with which all parties must struggle (e.g., reciprocity of certification is a major problem for states in all areas of elementary and secondary education). Business and industry, for example, are often willing to participate actively in preservice and inservice education for teachers, but it is not unusual to find that specialists in various areas (e.g., engineering, medicine, economics, personnel relations, etc.) are faced with enormous hurdles when they are placed on special assignments with schools. Unfortunately, rigidly drawn standards with limited flexibility for accommodating exceptions can inhibit many creative efforts.

3. **Career prospects.** Various writers have suggested that our nation's youth are sometimes educated or trained for prospects that are mere illusions; sometimes information available concerning employment prospects for graduates is not utilized, either inside or outside education. In some instances students are prepared for occupations that no longer exist, where the requirements specified in applications for employment bear little relationship to the demands of the position or where the demand for personnel is so unevenly distributed across the country that projections relative to the need or demand for workers is almost impossible to establish or to transmit to those who are most interested. When one considers the horizontal mobility of this nation's population, it be-

comes difficult to initiate state and local programs that have direct implications for other parts of the United States. We need better information concerning career prospects nationally to link education with work, if efforts to link education with work are to be successful.

4. Competencies perceived and required by those outside of education (e.g., business and industry) are sometimes unclear to students, teachers and others in the education community. The idea that career education represents a response to a call for education reform is far-reaching. It implies that education reform is not the only type required. Social, economic and political reforms are equally necessary. Right now the goals and objectives of various societal institutions differ considerably: business and industry are without question, profit oriented. Education, on the other hand, is unaccustomed to thinking in these terms and finds difficulty in relating dollars to proposed outcomes and objectives. Often we balk at the notion that jobs should be limited to training workers to fit a mold prescribed by a multiplicity of community forces outside education. The demands of business, the values of parents, the expectations of society at large—all reflect views that are sometimes incompatible with what educators feel they can promise to deliver.

Both industry and education have responsibilities to define what they perceive to be essential. Education, on the other hand, must make clear what it can deliver.

5. Security, safety and insurance related problems. I recently completed an informal study in which I interviewed a number of representatives of companies with large education units. They pointed out that security considerations required that restrictions be placed on visitations of outside persons. Some leaders expressed the opinion that their companies have to develop far more elaborate security arrangements if students and teachers are to be brought into various plants on a regular basis. Others were particularly concerned about safety, as they should be. Without question, work in many plants is dangerous, and safety can be a serious problem for children unfamiliar with shop routines and practices. Some industries probably cannot realistically conduct large tours or must limit visitations to secondary-school-age or older groups. Insurance problems constitute real barriers.

6. Continuity of communications between the schools and business and industry. Persons in business and industry frequently mention the importance of continuing their relationship with the schools. Changing rules and responsibilities in both systems, including the promotion and reassignment of personnel and the continuous reorganization of administrative units influence this relationship. Many field-work programs are truly hit-or-miss activities or are intermittently initiated. Very often, groups outside the schools who have established communications with school personnel find that after a year or two they simply have no one to talk to—people have been reassigned, new positions have been developed, there have been reorganizations either within the schools or within the industries and continuity of programming involving these various groups has simply disappeared.

7. **Time and/or money.** Time can easily be translated into money. Both are important considerations when one expects to involve people outside the classroom. Funding for both career education and vocational education that involves cooperation of business or industry cannot always be obtained by the schools. Businesses, on the other hand, are quick to indicate that they also do not always have resources available. It is certainly true that serving on educational advisory boards and participating in industry or school-sponsored seminars, supervising interns, or even conducting tours requires considerably more time than many businesses and industries have been able to allocate on a no-charge basis.

8. **The gap between the requirements of business, industry or labor and the program objectives of the schools.** Particularly in career education, this gap has become an issue. First, many key decision-makers in education, business and industry remain unconvinced that career education and related linkages are important. In short, there is often resistance to institutional change. Academicians who do not view career education as a logical and desirable goal of education are not likely to be receptive to efforts outside the academic community to establish cooperative relationships that involve the larger community. Leaders in industry or business, particularly those that are accustomed to training their own employees, can be extremely resistant to what they perceive to be an invasion by educators. Quite often school priorities, methods of instruction and even training equipment utilized by the schools do not necessarily complement the requirements of business or industry. The fact remains that institutions outside of education are not always willing to provide industrial internships or information seminars to keep school personnel abreast of new techniques and skill requirements. Educators are also too unwilling to leave classroom and administrative assignments to observe production procedures and equipment innovations or to study expected performance factors from the standpoint of employers.

The Schism between Vocational Career Education and the Liberal Arts

The back-to-basics movement, as well as other trends in contemporary American education, suggests that the gap between advocates for basic skills and advocates for vocational education and career education continues to widen, despite the fact that both vocational education and career education in the 1970's have as their goals the strengthening of basic skills. This unfortunate schism can be rectified only if all concerned parties clearly understand the objectives of vocational and career education. The current emphasis on minimal competency testing, accountability and other movements of American education can either enhance or retard the implementation of many outstanding career and vocational education programs at state and local levels. It is imperative that we deal with these concerns. Career education involves the full range of educational opportunities from preschool to graduate school as well as adult education. It was never expected that career education or vocational education should be separated from the mainstream of educational endeavors.

It is difficult to imagine that any of the political issues relating to vocational and career education would not be of interest to chief state school officers. Let me reiterate:

1. **Definitional issues.** There is still widespread confusion about the terms vocational education and career education. Interest in both career education and vocational education continues to grow, and it is unlikely that this momentum is going to decrease over the next several years. Chief state school officers are in a key position to interpret the goals and objectives of both vocational education and career education, and to delineate similarities and differences. Chiefs can be of great assistance in clarifying these concepts, particularly those concerned with state policies, legislation and long-term objectives at state and local levels. In my opinion, state departments of education should take the lead in clarifying these differences and similarities and in interpreting to the public what the priorities should be in each state.

2. **Issues involving interrelationships of programs.** The relationship between the goals of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and vocational and career education programs must be clarified. CETA is not going to go away. Issues having to do with the relationship between the objectives of CETA and the objectives of vocational and career education need to be addressed immediately. CETA has strengths and virtues, as well as a number of attributes that are of concern to politicians, students and business, industry and labor communities. It is important that we immediately establish linkages or strengthen existing ones to CETA prime sponsors and other groups concerned with youth and adult employment, continuing education and lifelong learning.

3. **Continuity between elementary/secondary education and postsecondary education.** It is critical at the state level that postsecondary agencies, community colleges, etc., be more fully involved in the planning processes for vocational and career education. Career education, for example, has barely made a dent at the postsecondary level. There are innumerable problems of a political nature that must be addressed. But this is an area that requires the leadership of policy-makers in both elementary/secondary and postsecondary education.

4. **Collaboration.** In both vocational education and career education, collaboration among leaders in education and business, industry, labor and government has occurred sporadically at local levels. There are thousands of effective vocational and career education programs that have

been introduced and are functioning effectively at local levels. If such relationships are already in place at the local level, it is relatively easy to find ways to involve the leadership of all these various communities. But the fact remains that large numbers of persons, particularly in the industry/labor communities, feel that education has left them out at the policy levels. It is far easier to develop a commitment if all concerned parties (and that includes the industry/labor leadership) are to be involved in the development of policies and legislation early on. Without effective efforts at collaboration, it is doubtful that career education will survive. The resolution of the major issues in collaboration probably will involve consensus-seeking among a large number of education, political, business and labor organizations that represent their constituency. For example, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, the National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures all have a stake in this issue. This is, of course, in addition to the interests of the National Alliance of Businessmen, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the United Auto Workers, the American Federation of Teachers and any number of other organizations that represent the interests of business and labor. It is a time for all special-interest organizations to agree upon strategies for overcoming some of these barriers. As long as we continue to convene ourselves only in role-alike groups, we will not succeed.

5. The schism between vocational education, career education and the liberal arts. The stand-off between vocational education advocates and liberal-arts advocates can be illustrated by "A Reflection of the Animosities and Perceptions Held by Those in Vocational Education and Liberal Arts," written by Warren Hill, Executive Director of ECS:

> I wind my little armature,
>   To Hell with all you guys
> Who are buried in your Liberal Arts
>   Up to your blinkin' eyes.
>
> You do not deign to use your hands,
>   In fact, you dare not risk it.
> Technology, you never use—
>   Or design, or make, or fix it.
>
> The Man who doesn't know
>   The Greek, the calculus, the Psalms,
> Is destined to a life of toil,
>   Small joys and calloused palms.
>
> Philosophy won't touch your soul,
>   The verities you'll shirk,
> So wind your wire, my little man,
>   You've found your proper work!

These lines point to the artificial divisions that have been drawn by educators as well as the general public of what constitutes excellence in education. It is not a simple task, but it is one that should be addressed by leaders in education.

There are undoubtedly other issues, many of which are probably far more pressing in your own states that you will want to address. But I offer these for your consideration.

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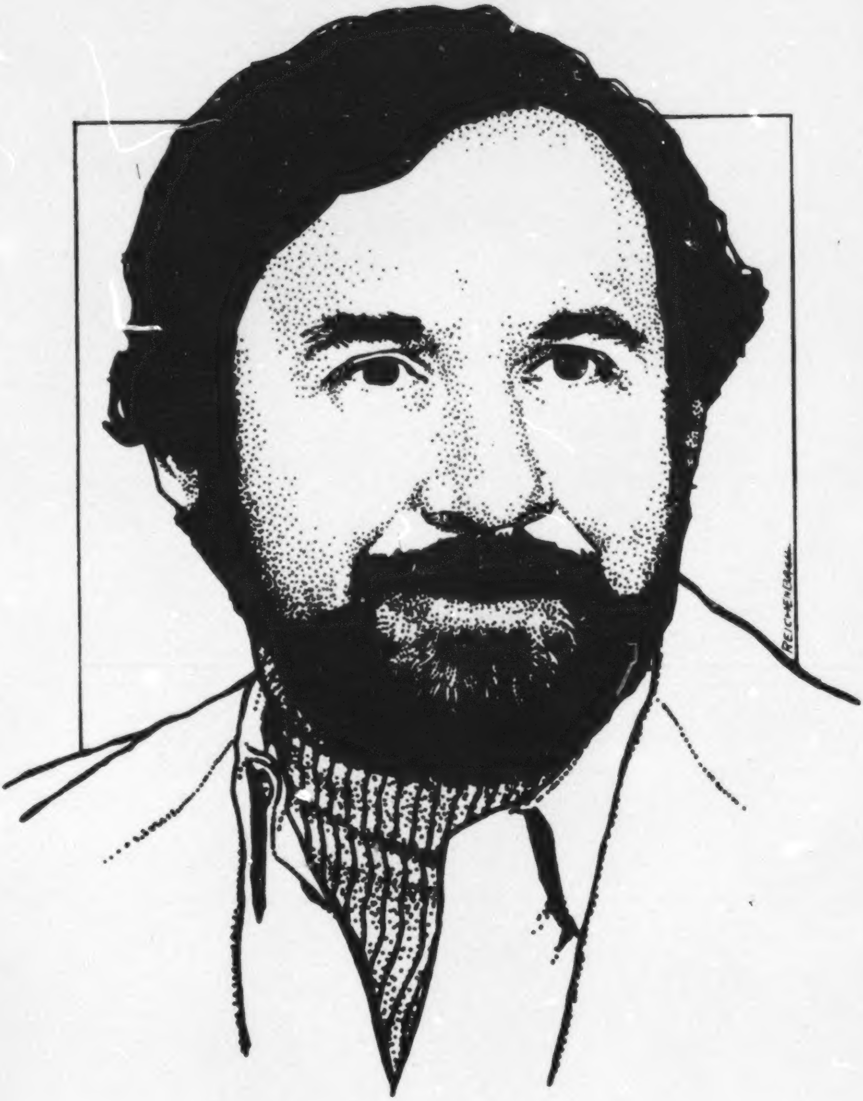
REICHENBACH

Chapter VIII

Political Issues in Bilingual/Bicultural Education

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The ability of traditional formal schooling to provide pluralistic learning opportunities has been strongly challenged from a variety of minority positions. Each challenge is based in a powerful socio-political stance regarding the larger democratic social structure. Within the context of the American civil rights movement the bilingual/bicultural effort is based in minority self-assertion. Yet, it does not constitute a total rejection of the social structure at large. Rather, the intent is to force the democratic system to operationalize its own ideals. It diverges from traditional formal schooling in its belief that heterogeneity rather than homogeneity should be the goal and that the curricula should reflect multiple linguistic and cultural realities, not strictly the power-holders' reality.

Several dilemmas are born out of the attempt to bring culturally and linguistically related egalitarian principles into behavior-forming institutions such as schools: Equality of treatment versus equality of opportunity; the rights of groups versus the rights of individuals; Unity in order to maintain freedom, versus freedom to maintain diversity. The seemingly unresolvable nature of these issues has generated near warlike conditions within the politics of bilingual/bicultural education. Arnove and Strout (1978) clearly identified the major contradiction facing parents and educators:

> Diversity and pluralism run counter to a central overriding purpose of schooling in America, or any other complex, national society for that matter. Historically, public schools have been established, regulated, and financed with the ends of forging a national consciousness, of developing a consensus on values which cuts across ethnic, racial, social class, religious, and regional differences.

Despite this contradiction, the democratic process does provide latitude for socio-political and educational experimentation. The progress that has been made in attempting to come to terms with the complexities of bilingual education can be examined from a variety of perspectives: the politics of language, legislative and court decisions, methodological approaches to bilingual/bicultural education, and research findings, and the implications for social action.

The Politics of Language: An Historical Overview

Bilingual education and politics cannot be understood outside of their historical context. While English has always been the predominant medium of instruction in the United States, the Founding Fathers never specifically chose it as the national language. Neither the Declaration of Independence nor the Constitution prescribes English as the official language. The pattern of migration to the U.S. not only encouraged but welcomed a variety of languages and traditions. Only Blacks were denied the right to retain their languages, in order to minimize rebellion and conflicts. As long as there was a sense of geographical and psychological openness, varied linguistic and cultural groups generally coexisted successfully (Turner, 1920). With a strong agrarian base, each group could maintain a certain level of self-sufficiency, and there was also a natural environment for the maintenance of religious traditions, which are strongly tied to language and culture.

As urban centers grew, the tendency was for ethnic groups to form linguistic and cultural enclaves. Thus private school systems with bilingual instruction, run by local community members, were developed. In an attempt to attract students to the *public* schools, the Ohio legislature in 1840 approved the first German-English bilingual instruction. Its success spread to other states, such as Maryland, Indiana, Missouri, Colorado, Oregon, Kentucky and Louisiana, where public bilingual schools for German, French and Spanish speakers continued until the late 1800's. In addition, bilingual schools continued in the private sector (Kanoon, 1978). During this period, multiple ethnic, religious and racial groups participated in the competition for power to make curricular and administrative decisions.

Movement toward monolingual instruction in public education. Toward the end of the 1800's a growing nativist movement began to alter the traditionally pluralistic tendencies of the society. As increasing numbers of southern and eastern European immigrants arrived, already established northern and western Europeans wanted to retain control of political structures and the schools. The fermentative nature of this period is clearly illustrated by Tyack (1974):

> Like religion, bilingualism and biculturalism aroused strong feelings in public school politics. Here, nativists and immigrants clashed head-on in urban school politics. To many immigrants it was vital to assert the value of their culture—after all, they paid taxes and deserved a say in the curriculum.

The growing movement of nationalism spurred by previously established groups began a wave of xenophobic legislation to establish English-only instruction in schools from 1890 to 1923 (Zirkel, 1977). During this same period restrictive immigration acts, climaxing in a hysteria during World War I as to the loyalties of the new immigrants, led to crash programs of "Americanization" in schools.

While most legislation from the late 1800's until the 1960's specified that English be the only medium of instruction in public schools, one isolated Supreme Court decision—*Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923)—declared such legislation unconstitutional. However, this case had little effect in discouraging the obliteration of bilingual instruction until World War II forced the U.S. to recognize its inadequacies in the teaching of languages.

The 1958 National Defense Education Act paved the way toward more emphasis on language teaching. The first bilingual school of the contemporary period was begun in Miami in 1963 in response to the growing demands of the Cuban-American community, and by 1967, 21 states had some bilingual education programs (Kanoon, 1978; Andersson and Boyer, 1970).

Legislation and Court Decisions

Federal legislation. As part of the compensatory effort to bridge the learning and economic gaps in the U.S., Congress in 1968 appropriated the first federal monies for bilingual education, under Title VII of ESEA. Title VII was renewed and expanded in 1974 and 1978 with funds authorized until 1983. At present five federal programs include projects designed to meet the needs of Limited English Speaking (LES) and Non-English Speaking (NES) students. The five sources are:

- The Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This program provides the largest amount of funds for bilingual education. Essentially, it proposes a transitional model in which, ideally, the non-English language is to be dropped once English proficiency is attained.
- Migrant programs under Title I of ESEA. These programs do not provide for full bilingual education but allow for the hiring of bilingual aides.
- The Federal Educationally Disadvantaged Program, also under Title I of ESEA. Some bilingual services may be provided under this program, since linguistic difficulties fall under the guidelines for disadvantaged students.
- The Emergency School Aid Act. This legislation is designed to facilitate desegregation, but 4% of the funds may be used for bilingual education as part of the desegregation process.
- English as a Second Language, under Title I of ESEA. Obviously, this is a transitional rather than a language maintenance program. (Alexander and Nava, 1976)

All of these programs have different guidelines and imply varying degrees of emphasis along a language transition/language maintenance continuum. It is therefore difficult for districts interested in bilingual education to unravel all the possibilities and stipulations in order to finally determine the best source(s) of funding for the needs of their LES and NES students.

Despite the red tape, these five programs can easily create the illusion that there is an impressive collection of legislation related to the needs of groups whose native tongue is not English. But it is important to remember that these programs do not mean anything without the money to implement them. As with any legislative package, funds appropriated, funds authorized, and funds spent may represent vastly disparate figures. The Bilingual Education Act, Title VII, is the largest source of funds, and in 1969 $30 million was authorized for the program. By the time all political factions had their say, however, the appropriations committee had whittled the figure down to $7.5 million. In 1973 $135 million was authorized but only $45 million was spent. More recently, in 1976, $140 million was authorized but the final appropriation was almost $98 million (USOE, 1978).

This situation can be attributed to the way in which bilingual education has been presented and the way it is perceived by legislators:

> . . . the only way to convince appropriations committees to take bilingual education seriously is to convince them (a) that it is not merely a sectional matter, and (b) that it is not merely yet another part of the anti-poverty program. (Cordasco, 1976)

Court decisions. In an unprecedented manner, pro-bilingual advocates in recent years have used the court system to force the schools to come to terms with the learning needs and interests of NES and LES students. The political controversy over bilingual education has taken on an entirely new direction since the U.S. Supreme Court cases of *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Serna v. Portales* (1974). The previously mentioned federal programs, such as Title VII, are characterized by their optional nature as well as by limited funds, but with these court cases the spectrum has shifted toward the strong possibility of court-ordered bilingual education. In fact, the Lau case has set a significant precedent for court jurisdiction in the implementation of special programs for limited or non-English-speaking students. Basing a unanimous decision on the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Court concluded that equal treatment of English-speaking and non-English speaking students did not constitute equal educational opportunity and therefore was in violation of non-English-speaking students' civil rights (Cordasco, 1976).

For many educators and parents already sympathetic to the philosophy of bilingual education the spirit of such court decisions appears to be a strong force in their favor. Those not intellectually and emotionally committed to the philosophy, however, perceive the legal implications to be very blurred. A major source of this ambiguity rests in the fact that Lau, for example, does not prescribe specific curricular content or methodology to restore the civil rights of the students in question. Thus a broad range of programs with diverse philosophical underpinnings, from "assimilation as quickly as possible" to "separatism without discrimination" (desegregation notwithstanding), could possibly satisfy the spirit of Lau and other decisions. As a result, these court cases have heightened public awareness of the issue, but they have also significantly raised the temperature of debates over linguistically and culturally unified versus diversified approaches to schooling in the U.S. Educators involved in the debate are by no means unanimous in their opinions of the urgency and nature of the implementation of special programs. On the one hand, consultants for a Lau Center[1] in California interpret the Lau decision as a bilingual education mandate for all schools with a certain percentage of students whose mother tongue is not English:

> The Supreme Court established a precedent that bilingual education programs are a necessity, not a matter of choice, when there are non-English-speaking or limited-English-speaking students in the school. (Alexander and Nava, 1976)

On the other hand, a legal memorandum to secondary school principals expresses much more doubt about the binding nature of such decisions:

> There is no final answer at this time to the question of whether or not a school district with non-English-speaking students has a legal obligation to provide a bilingual program for these students. (NASSP, 1976)

Despite the ambiguity in the Lau decision, the HEW Office of Civil Rights has taken a strong pro-bilingual stand. In 1975, OCR produced a memo known as the "Lau remedies," which specifies that school districts must implement a bilingual program or lose federal funding if found not in compliance with their interpretation of Lau. Many school districts have since been cited for non-compliance and as a result have had to adopt a Lau plan to continue receiving federal funding. A typical Lau plan would include as Lau students not only NES and LES children but also those who have achieved functional English skills but are still experiencing underachievement in basic academic areas. Once the students have been identified, the district must adopt goals which seek to provide bilingual/bicultural instruction until the learner is sufficiently proficient in English (taken from Los Angeles Unified School District Lau Plan, May 30, 1978).

State legislation. As recently as 1975, 12 states still had laws stating that public instruction could be given *only* in English. Fourteen other states had no provisions whatsoever regarding language of instruction, apparently allowing for the implementation or non-implementation of bilingual education according to local dispositions and funds. However, as a result of federal appropriations for bilingual education and OCR pressures, a significant amount of bilingual legislation has been generated recently at the state level. An increasing number of states—24 in 1975, twice the 1971 number—expressly or implicitly permit instruction in a language other than English. Ten of these 24 have actually stipulated conditions under which a school is *required* to offer bilingual instruction. These states are Alaska, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan,

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[1] Lau Centers have been established nationwide to assist school districts in the planning and evaluation of programs suitable to the needs of limited- and non-English-speaking students.

New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, California and Colorado. In addition, Puerto Rico requires the use of Spanish as a language of instruction (Blanco, 1978).

On the basis of the growing number of states that explicitly allow, and in some cases even require bilingual education, it could be assumed that learning environments are improving for NES and LES students. Just as with the federal programs, though, potential and actual implementation are two very different things. To take one case, California is a state in which many leaders have energetically sought to lessen linguistic inequities, yet according to a 1975 survey by the California Advisory Committee to the Commission on Civil Rights, fewer than 9% of the identified limited- and non-English-speaking students in the state were receiving bilingual instruction. Moreover, the committee reported an extreme lack of coordination between the state department of education and the local projects. This deficiency greatly hindered the effectiveness of the programs. The advisory committee concluded:

> . . . the basic finding of this report is that the State Department of Education has failed to insure that California's non- and limited-English-speaking student population receives equal educational opportunities. (California Advisory Committee, 1976)

A 1976 amendment (the Chacon-Moscone bill) to the California Bilingual Act of 1972 does provide for better coordination, evaluation, and funding of bilingual programs and should improve the scope and quality of these programs in the near future.

Bilingual plans, both federal and state, are not being implemented well. The obstacles are deeply political—and therefore emotional. On one side are those who argue that everybody who lives in the U.S. should speak English and only English, or that it is unfair to use tax dollars to support a separatist curriculum, or that federal and state mandates for bilingual education with its concomitant bicultural approach is a threat to the nation's unity and stability. On the other side are those who believe experience has shown that unless a curriculum is in harmony with the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the learner, it all too often defeats the learner and therefore the democratic principles of our society as well.

Translating these ultimately philosophical stances into human behavior, one can find educators entrenched in hostile pro- and anti-bilingual camps. Administrators are either frantically searching for bilingual funds or for legal loopholes. Most important, though, is the growing public division over the issue, raising the possibility of some retreat from the bilingual advances already made. A 1977 amendment to Colorado's bilingual law that would make the offering of bilingual instruction voluntary rather than required encapsulates this polarization. On the assimilationist side, an advocate of the amendment proclaimed that:

> One thing that has made this country great is to be able to travel from border to border and function in one language. And forever let

> it be so. . . . How much more do we owe the Spanish youngsters than other youngsters?

On the pluralist side, the testimony of one Latino parent reflected a strong fear that the amendment's passage would virtually abolish bilingual education in Colorado, because of the political structure of the state:

> You give us a taste of something that's good for all of us, then you begin to take it away. I promise you, if the programs aren't mandated, then the people who need them won't get them. Our (school) board will be the first to take it away. (*Rocky Mountain News*, 1977)

Transitional, Maintenance, Enrichment and Immersion Models of Bilingual Education[2]

Thus far we have limited the discussion to money and mandates—or lack thereof—for bilingual programs. A variety of bilingual models currently deliver these programs. Even among those implementing them, however, there is little understanding of the various models' underlying assumptions and potential results. The following discussion briefly delineates the four basic bilingual models and analyzes their political implications.

1. **Transitional.** NES and LES students receive bicultural instruction in L1 and L2 only until they are sufficiently fluent in L2 (English in the U.S.) to mainstream them. It is assumed that skills learned in L1 transfer to L2. Federal money appropriated for bilingual education has been directed into the transitional model, and consequently the majority of bilingual programs in the U.S. fall into this category. There are two basic arguments against the transitional model: (1) it ultimately rejects the language and culture of NES and LES students, giving instructional validity to the mother language and culture only until English is mastered; (2) it is essentially one more type of compensatory education, which in general has had little effect in enhancing "disadvantaged" learners' test scores (cf. Mitchell, 1978). Critics point out that the transitional model as a compensatory one tracks minority language students into separate, low ability groups, the outcome of which is maintenance of lower class status (Hernandez-Chavez, 1977; Kjolseth, 1972; Paulston, 1977).

2. **Maintenance.** The child receives instruction as needed in both L1 and L2, the native language and culture being maintained as part of the curriculum through grade 12. Under this approach a child may remain in a bilingual program long after English has been mastered, and consequently the maintenance model has raised controversy over the use of federal monies for such programs (Epstein, 1977). At the local level maintenance bilingual education is also a very sensitive issue. It is a matter of great po-

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[2] The discussion of these models is partially based on Ginger Collier's unpublished 1978 paper, "Bilingual Education in the U.S.," 3-5.

litical, economic and social importance for community groups that wish to preserve their ethnic heritage. The maintenance model affords avenues for greater community control of the school and for greater minority political awareness. In addition it can be an economic boost to the language minority community by providing teaching and support-personnel jobs for bilingual residents.

At the same time, maintenance bilingual programs constitute a greater threat than transitional programs to individuals who are opposed to the existence of multiple languages and cultures within the U.S. public schools. Such programs are a particular threat to non-bilingual school personnel, because these programs create a heavier demand for fully bilingual and bicultural teachers. For example, the U.S. District Court in New York recently ruled in *Cintron v. Brentwood* (1978) that bilingual teachers could bump teachers with more seniority if the bilingual teachers were needed to meet the needs of NES and LES students. The court in effect ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 takes precedence over state tenure laws (California State Department of Education, 1978). This court decision raises the prospect that more school districts will wish to test the case. Observers of the situation are increasingly talking of the movement as potentially adding a new aspect to affirmative action programs, that of bilingualism in addition to race, sex and ethnicity.

3. Enrichment. This model stresses the equal status of all languages within the school structure. A roughly equal number of English speakers and non-English speakers are grouped within the same classroom. At the same time that basic academic skills are acquired through the appropriate language, the children—English as well as non-English-speaking—are mastering a second language and are becoming familiar with other cultural patterns.

The enrichment model has developed in conjunction with arguments for integrated education, and because of its structure it does have the potential to provide a truly culturally pluralistic learning environment. Its success may depend largely, however, on the ability of the teacher to meet the extremely varied learning needs of the students and to create the appropriate social climate. In addition, many English-speaking parents may fear that their children will receive an inferior education when schooled with language minority learners on such an equal basis. The model actually calls for a significant change in people's attitudes toward language and culture, requiring the rare ability to give equal status to each language and culture found in the community.

4. Immersion. The emphasis is on the child's learning the second language as quickly as possible through constant exposure. For example, upon entering school, the child would be taught in the second language nearly all day, with perhaps one class being given in the native language (L1).

In considering immersion programs, a distinction must be made between speakers of a socially dominant language who are learning a second language (e.g., an Anglo learning Spanish), and speakers of a minority language who are learning the socially dominant language (e.g., a Mexican immigrant learning English). Immersion education has been shown to work well only with speakers of the dominant language. For example, it has been used a great deal in French Canada for the teaching of French to middle class English-speaking students (Lambert and Tucker, 1972), and it has been successfully employed in Culver City, California, to teach Spanish to English-speaking children (Cohen, 1975a). Such programs tend to work well in these cases because L1 already has status and is constantly reinforced outside the classroom. The model, however, does not work well for language minority children, since their home language and identity are so strongly threatened. For these groups, the model has been referred to as "submersion" rather than immersion (Cohen, 1975b). Actually, the immersion model, without that title, has been used for the past half century on language minority children in the U.S. Those children have been expected to learn English as quickly as possible, at the same time acquiring academic skills through the language which they have not yet mastered. In many cases they have been physically punished for speaking their native language at school. The results, of course, have been less than optimal.

These four models share a concern for the linguistic and academic needs of NES and LES students, but as we have seen, they operate from differing value systems. Persons involved in the bilingual effort must seek to contextualize their particular program by developing a local model which is based on a socio-linguistic, economic and ideological profile of the community. The four prototypical models discussed here reflect the wide range of stances possible within the bilingual/bicultural movement. Rather than looking for an exportable model that will fit all contexts, an eclectic approach is suggested—an approach in which the underpinnings of each model are understood, and in which efforts are made to attain harmony between education theories and community desires.

Research Findings [3]

Pro- and anti-bilingual forces are forever searching for solid data that will support their respective positions. On the one hand are those who feel that bilingual instruction is a fiasco because it has not produced substantial evidence that bilingually educated children do better in school, learn English as a second language, or develop better self-images. At the other extreme are those who feel that any evidence against the effectiveness of bilingual education is more a statement on the poor quality of the research methodology than on the quality of bilingual education itself. It is maintained that very little of the complexity of language learning is understood by researchers; the wrong questions are being asked in the wrong way, and faulty data are emerging. Zappert and Cruz (1977), in an analysis of over 300 evaluation and research studies in bilingual education, found only twelve studies that fit their criteria for methodological soundness. The need for better evaluation of programs is also mentioned repeatedly in testimony to Congress on bilingual education. At the most recent international conference on bilingual education (held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in Spring, 1978), good research and evaluation was again identified as the one overriding issue for the survival of bilingual programs.

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[3] For a more extensive treatment of this area, see Collier, *op. cit.*

Considering now some of the research that has already been done, studies before the 1960's tended to suggest that bilingualism had a detrimental effect on intellectual functioning. These studies were later attacked for their lack of control for such crucial variables as SES, age, sex, educational background and language dominance. In 1962, the classic Peal and Lambert study, conducted in Canada, controlled for all the aforementioned variables and found bilingualism instead to be associated with a greater variety and strength of mental skills than was monolingualism. This research design has been adapted for use in a number of subsequent contexts, and the results generally show that bilinguals perform at least as well as monolinguals and frequently better (cf. Ramirez, 1977, for a review of these studies).

These findings should not be confused with evaluations which show negative or negligible results in the achievement scores of students who have been enrolled in bilingual schools for only one or two years. The Canadian studies on bilingualism consistently show that a student must be in a good bilingual program for a minimum of three to four years in order to show gains which exceed those of a comparable student being schooled monolingually. A range of longitudinal studies has indicated positive gains cognitively and affectively by children enrolled in bilingual programs over at least four years (Ramos, 1967; Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Mackey and Beebe, 1977; Spolsky, 1978).

Despite the optimistic outlook one gets from these longitudinal studies, a recent report released by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) has undermined the credibility of bilingual education. An evaluation of the impact of ESEA Title VII Spanish/English bilingual programs, the study has generated more confusion than clarity on the worth of bilingual instruction. Among the key findings are:

1. Relative to national norms, Title VII Hispanic students, across grades, performed at about the 20th percentile in English reading and at about the 30th percentile in mathematics.

2. Non-Title VII Hispanic students outperformed Title VII students on English language arts. There were large differences in language dominance, the non-Title VII group being more English-dominant than the Title VII group.

3. Participation in a Title VII project did not affect attitudes toward school-related activities.

(Los Angeles City Schools, 1978)

Numerous scholars and organizations have questioned the methodological soundness of the AIR study. For example,

> An analysis of the AIR study conducted by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) identifies major discrepancies in the identification of the target population, the selection of comparable control groups, test instruments used in the study, the amount of time between pre- and post-testing, lack of consistency in programs being studied, adequacy of instructional staff, and the source of funds being used. (Epstein, 1977)

Bilingual research has not escaped being drawn into the bilingual political conflict. Those skeptical of bilingual education naturally lean on research findings that challenge the viability of such programs. Probilingual groups on the other hand tend to be very critical of research that questions bilingual education. Given this situation, bilingual policies presently cannot be made on the basis of a few simple "facts."

Implications for Social Action

As educators, we too often have to make key decisions in the face of ambiguity. We cannot wait for all interested groups to come to terms with all their respective biases. Yet, we must listen. Personally, I believe that a good enrichment bilingual program is pedagogically and socially defensible.

Since the beginning of extensive public education in the U.S., we have perceived the school to be the engine of advancement for socially and economically marginal populations. The American public school has essentially been assigned the task of attempting to operationalize the egalitarian ethos. Recognizing this, bilingual education was first born in the mid-1800's as an effort to bring linguistic and cultural fairness to European immigrant groups as well as to some indigenous languages. In the late 1960's, under a very different set of circumstances, the federal government chose to provide funds for bilingual education as a way to help NES and LES students overcome their so-called "disadvantaged" backgrounds. While bilingual programs need to overcome the philosophical weaknesses inherent in most compensatory-type legislation, I have much faith in the ability of good bilingual programs to provide a curricular infrastructure that will enhance *all* learners' cognitive and affective domains. It is only too obvious that contemporary monolingual programs have failed to adequately educate most NES and LES students. Taking the stand then that bilingual education is a viable means for improving the future of language minority students, as well as for enriching the lives of American children in general, well-designed structural support will be needed in order for quality programs to emerge. I recommend the following for engendering such support:

- As the federal government leans in the direction of placing the responsibility of bilingual education on the states, policy-makers need to be able to sort out the myriad of factors which must go into bilingual planning. A variety of types of information must be processed and evaluated: the desires of various constituent groups; the research data available; the various approaches to bilingual education and their implications; and the human and material resources available.

- In order to provide a platform for sound curricular development, there is a need to promote linguistic and educational research on bilingual learning and cognitive/affective development.

- Since much of the criticism aimed at bilingual education can be traced to the dearth of adequately trained personnel, there is a need to form channels for the training of solidly qualified bilingual teachers.

- Because bilingual education is often perceived merely as a political concession to minorities, educational leaders need to be in a position to act on and to portray bilingual education as an outgrowth of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As part of the civil rights movement, bilingual education can help mend—not produce more tears in— the national fabric.

- Given the nation's rapidly changing demographic texture toward more heterogeneity, coupled with continuing legal mandates for integrated education, educational leaders need to make commitments toward locally adapted forms of the enrichment bilingual model. This model, as mentioned before, has significant potential to foster social and ethnic harmony.

These recommended actions and commitments are consistent with our desire to redress what has often turned out to be the *in*equitable function of education in the U.S. It is, after all, our goal to provide for every child the type of education that will enable him or her to negotiate with life—politically, economically, socially, culturally and linguistically—from a point of strength.

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Chapter IX

Political Issues in Teacher Education and Certification

by

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The growth and importance of state departments of education in teacher education highlight the need for some empirically based perceptions of how and by whom political power is exercised in the licensure and certification of educational personnel. We cannot afford to neglect the investment of budget resources in the study of how policy decisions at the state level may be influenced by those of us engaged in the educational processes of preparing teachers, administrators and other educational specialists.

Politics is a very important word to add to all educational policy decisions. The term "politics of teacher education" is far more descriptive than the academic term "teacher education." Many of the best laid plans of chief state school officers and teacher educators for creating a quality system of teacher education and certification have foundered on the shoals of inept political processes.

Many of us in the field of educational management have had little formal training in political strategies and processes. We have had to learn our political lessons the hard way. Most of us were taught how to make a school schedule, prepare a budget and the other technical aspects of school administration. And because our survival in the job has dictated it, we find that we can conduct public opinion polls, analyze voter behavior, organize political campaigns, operate collective bargaining sessions and deal with the power structures and the politics of community and professional organizations. But modern political techniques require far higher levels of sophistication than most of us ever dreamed of needing when we entered the field of public education. We now know that even at its highest levels of sophistication, politics remains an art when one attempts to move people toward decisions.

Conceptual knowledge of the state power structure is essential for teacher educators. Educational leaders in the field of teacher preparation and certification need to answer many questions. What is the shape of the state power structure? Is it pluralistic—a pluralism of elites, monopolistic, or another form? What are the sources of power in state decisions? What are the latent sources of political power which, with encouragement, could become active? Are the dynamics of power best described as a process based on consensus, competition among elites, fragmented conflict or other appropriate descriptions?

The Power Structure

The fact is that teacher educators do not really know much about the state power structure. This area is a much neglected field of educational research. Nonetheless we do have enough data to suggest that indeed identifiable state power structures do exist—the shapes and dynamics of these structures differ among the states, and the political strategies appropriate to educational policy decisionmaking affecting teacher education vary from state to state.

State decisionmaking process in the teacher education and certification sector involves influence from national, state and local levels. Of considerable concern to all teacher educators is the way in which effective communication across state boundaries influences state educational policies affecting teacher education and licensure. Modern legislators are surrounded by professional support staff and legislative reference bureaus that conduct effective interstate communication among their membership. Consequently, we are facing a political future in teacher education in which the unique nature of state educational legislation will be the example rather than the rule. If we allow national systems to have greater influence on state teacher education programs, we will be compelled to ask ourselves if state boards of education, chief state school officers or state legislators really count. Just as national political efforts can have a detrimental effect on state-level planning in the area of teacher education, so also can local educational groups have questionable impact on state educational policy decisions. Perhaps we can give serious attention to seeking more definitive answers about what each level of politics can best contribute to the development of a quality program of teacher education and certification. The myth of the separation of politics and education is in the process of being totally obliterated in state after state as practitioners and legislators grapple with the related problems whose ultimate funding and support must compete with a growing number of national, state and local agencies for budget resources which are becoming more and more difficult to obtain.

In a time of trouble it is important to analyze what our problems are and to see if there are some creative rather than political ways to deal with those issues.

We in teacher education have had something to contend with in recent times that most of us did not expect. Even after it happened, we almost refused to believe it. When the birth rate went down, we should have started counting very early to learn how many students there would or would not be some years later enrolling in the public schools. But most of us waited until the declining enrollment problem hit us squarely in the face. We were also confronted with an economic disaster of major proportions, a national recession. Most of us believed there would never be a time when educational institutions would have to struggle with one another over support funds.

Changing Public Attitude

We also have experienced over the past decade a very changing public attitude toward teacher preparation programs—and teachers. The overwhelming majority of recent books on education were written by critics of schools as institutions. Fortunately, most people have not read those books. But they have had quite an effect on the public's attitudes about teachers because the authors were, and increasingly are, being interviewed on nationally televised programs.

The majority of published works that have intrigued the public curiosity have been hostile and negative toward the quality of teachers' work. Unfortunately these popular criticisms have been accepted by the media and a large majority of our citizens as providing accurate evidence of what goes on in the nation's public schools.

There is yet another aspect to the distrust which many people express about teachers. It is that teacher training institutions have to show that they are alive politically by constantly trying out something new and different in their preparation processes. We have learned perhaps a bit too late that we cannot sell something to the public as quality which is constantly moving and constantly changing. We in teacher education ought to be saying that there are certain things that are done in the preparation process that are *right* and that we should not change them—unless someone proves to us that they do not work or that they have something better.

Moreover, criticism of teacher education is fed by the fire of teachers themselves who feel that their preservice education did not prepare them for some of the great problems with which they must contend. So there tends to be considerable "bad-mouthing" of teacher education by teachers, principals and superintendents.

There is a similar problem in the relationship between teachers and the colleges and universities that prepared them.

Many people in the colleges and universities are constantly criticizing teachers for their lack of competence. This so-called group of scholars talks about the need to devise "teacher-proof" materials and curricula. When that fight is over, the public believes there is nothing good about public education and that it is an affront to taxpayers' to continue wasting public money on public education. This situation has led legislators and congressional people to focus their attention on preparation programs at colleges and universities. Consequently they are now supporting not only a Teacher Corps but also Teacher Centers and other professional arrangements by which teachers will be prepared through some sort of craft approach with year-long internships.

The people who are proposing dismantling teacher preparation programs to a large extent are not really friends of teachrs or of education. Despite the politics involved in this power play, it would be disastrous to succumb to this latest pressure. Teachers and chief state school officers have to begin to realize that those who are now joining them in the criticism of the colleges and universities are really saying, "Look, you ought to de-professionalize the preparation and entry processes to teaching. You ought to require less time and academic training."

The Need for Improvement

The professional and political obligation of chief state school officers is to take a detached and objective look at what teachers individually and collectively are trying to achieve through this political game. The same obligation obtains for those of us in higher education who are involved with the preparation and professional development programs. The need for improved quality in public education is so great that all educational agencies and professional organizations involved in the enterprise must cooperate if the quality goal is to be realized. If members of the educational community are able to build a strong coalition, we will be able to come through this period of political power struggle quite well. But if we do not and if we continue to fight each other, education is going to lose.

Colleges and universities involved with teacher preparation programs need thoughtful friends today more than at any time in my experience. They are beset by problems they cannot solve and by insistent questions they cannot answer to the satisfaction of their detractors. They are charged with costing more and teaching less, with the inability to prepare persons who can successfully master the basic learning skills, and with making children the pawns in the political power struggle for control of educational funds and policies.

I have no quarrel with most of the efforts to make the colleges and universities improve their pre-service and professional development programs. There is no overriding consensus, however, on what reforms should be adopted—but just that the colleges and the schools should stop their "languishing" and get on with the business of improving the quality of their products. Constantly we are warned by our critics inside the profession and out that our colleges of education will "accumulate a margin of mediocrity that in time will become insuperable" unless we become actively involved with teacher organizations and state departments of education in shaping the proper reforms. In this sense, the time is right for some significant advances in teacher education.

We have just finished more than a decade of experience in relatively large scale research and development in the field of teacher preparation. We have also had more than a decade of extended demonstrations and testing of different models of teacher training. In no other period in our educational history have so many talented persons turned their attention to the improvement of teaching and teacher education. Never have there been so many new and tested teacher training materials available for widespread use. And from these investigations we have learned much.

Lessons

The first lesson we have learned is that teacher preparation takes time—especially from the first day of actual practice until a newcomer can step into a classroom with confidence and competence. Our research evidence suggests that the two-year post-baccalaureate Teacher Corps model is superior to the one-year MAT program and also to the four-year undergraduate model that typically allows only a year or less from the time of student teaching observation to regular classroom assignments.

The second lesson we have learned is that we cannot mass produce highly competent professional teachers. The product must be custom built. Five hundred student teachers per semester—methods classes of one hundred, and educational psychology sections of two hundred students just do not work. The positive consequences of small, individually tailored training programs is unequivocal. On the surface, small numbers of persons in program activities appear to be exorbitantly costly and therefore an impractical scheme. But this has not been so. Programs that combine pre-service with professional development and programs utilizing a cooperative arrangement for the introduction of beginners to practice are practical because the cost per participant both pre-service and in-service is not excessive.

A third lesson we have learned—which may be the most significant—relates to the importance of practice. For a long time student teaching has been alleged to be the best and some claim to be the only worthwhile component of the teacher training program. But it requires frequent, varied and criticized practice: observation, immediate feedback and practice again to perfect performance in a variety of situations with different ages, socioeconomic levels and observations and critiques by a variety of observers—supervisors, peers, students—each of whom can comment from a different vantage point.

The fourth lesson we have learned is that the state department of education, local education agencies and the university must all participate in the training. No agency can do that job alone. Each brings a unique and essential contribution. When one part is missing, the whole is seriously flawed.

The fifth we have learned is that in-service and pre-service have more in common than previously imagined and that they are probably better accomplished together. Beginners, experienced teachers and college specialists, researchers and developers all working together in a problem-solving mode in a school setting provide an exciting environment for teacher training. We all learn, improve our skills and understandings when we collaborate in making a better learning environment in a regular school community setting. As pre-service and in-service blend into each other, a new and powerful concept—the need for a continuing life-long program of professional development begins to take shape. Furthermore, we have come to understand that we do not need model or laboratory schools fashioned after the teaching hospital idea. The learning of a beginning teacher is far more realistic and lasting when it takes place in a regular school community setting alongside skilled, dedicated and experienced school and college teachers.

Another lesson we have learned is that teacher training with the missing third party—parents and community members—falls far short of the mark of excellence and responsiveness. The past decade has witnessed considerable experimentation with new forms of school-community collaboration. Training programs for experienced teachers and neophytes alike become richer, more frequent and more effective when community members participate actively and become part of the decisionmaking processes in school affairs. When schools and communities work together, when their values and priorities are consonant, education becomes more powerful.

Our seventh lesson is new insights into teachers' skills training. We have long been in general agreement that fully professional teachers who will continue their development over a lifetime need to be well-grounded in humanistic studies and the behavioral sciences that underlie educational practice: in history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics and political science. But how and when to present these theoretical underpinnings so that they "take" with teachers in preparation has been elusive. During the last few years in some demonstration and experimental projects, we have begun to learn how these skills can be better timed and better taught. Thus contemporary programs are including more flexible arrangements, individual approaches, workshops and problem-solving sessions. We have a long way to go—but we know the direction, and the first steps have been taken.

Our eighth lesson is new understanding of the requirements of teacher competence. There has never been doubt about the necessity for teachers to have a sound liberal or general education—a broad, deep training in the subject matter they are to teach. We know that a college subject frequently has gaps and inappropriate emphasis for the prospective teacher of that subject. However, certification requirements and standards of accreditation are beginning to correct these problems by requiring *demonstrated competence* in addition to completion of college courses. The mistaken idea of a teaching major and minor—that is, full preparation to teach in one subject and half preparation in another—is beginning to give way to the proposition that a person must be fully prepared in any subject he or she is to teach and that qualification for the license should reflect this understanding.

Our ninth lesson is that the principle of individual differences applies to teachers and to teacher training as well as to children. This awareness rules out "anything goes," with each person doing his or her own thing in his or her own way. Teacher training needs high, well-conceived common standards of competence rigorously adhered to. But we also believe there are many routes to the standard. All persons do not begin at the same place, and rates of progress will vary. While all teachers should have at first a minimum and later a richer repertoire of teaching strategies and skills, their teaching styles will and should differ.

The final lesson which we knew all along but have seldom applied is that excellent teacher training requires budget support. The program is not cheap. Even though detailed cost accounting has not yet been fully achieved in teacher education, the facts are self-evident that teacher education has always been the least expensive of almost all programs which colleges and universities sponsor. Strong social and political forces work to keep it that way. We now have demonstrated that high quality teacher training is possible when resources are available. We need the help of the chief state school officers if this lesson is to be taken seriously.

What we are doing in teacher education falls far short of the mark of what we know we should be doing. The report card is not good. We take too little time; we try to train too many people; we do not provide for nearly enough criticized practice; we separate in-service training too much from pre-service education; the universities and colleges live too much in worlds apart from the public schools and their communities; parents are only tangentially involved; the foundations of education are both neglected and for the most part, questionably taught. A genuine liberal education is often lacking, and subject matter competence is more the exception than the rule. Individually, differences are typically not honored as all persons in the preparation program are lock-stepped through their coursework, and money is almost always in short supply. We typically do not practice what we preach in teacher education.

The law of the physical universe—the law of inertia—seems still to be in effect in colleges and universities and partly explains why teacher education has changed so slowly and so little. The burden of proof always seems to fall on those who want change. The defenders of the status quo are not called upon to justify present practice as being better than the proposed change.

Powerful political forces are at work to keep rigorous accreditation standards from being applied to teacher certification and preparation programs: teacher education institutions want to keep up their enrollments; school boards and administrators want a large pool of teachers to choose from; and society–especially the lower classes–wants easy access to teaching as a route toward upward mobility. A teacher shortage existed for so long that laws and certification standards were formulated to keep the gates of entrance to teaching wide open. The deep-seated attitude among college and university professors—that little or no pedagogical training is required for teaching—has conspired with other forces to keep pedagogical standards and requirements low and minimal. Chief state school officers hesitate to get involved in pre-service training because they believe it is something that the colleges and universities should do. Busy schoolteachers and administrators readily conclude that they do not have time for additional burdens of this kind. Chief state school officers typically have not seen teacher education and certification as a political concern of state departments of education.

New Designs

We are ready now for some new designs that might move teacher education significantly forward. The time is right for new models to be formulated—fully funded—and subjected to thorough research and development. Minimal competency standards and tests alone, as some states are proposing as the major avenue of access to licensure and certification, will not suffice.

Four years of undergraduate study is currently the predominant form of teacher preparation in the United States. But these programs vary so widely in structure, content and method as to defy systematic study and testing. At least three different models—two undergraduate and one graduate—each to incorporate as much as possible of what we already know about what contributes to success in teacher preparation and professional development activities, are required.

The first model would have little or no practice component. It would be a four-year undergraduate model that would be designed to provide a highly effective liberal education, a well-designed subject matter concentration with eventual school teaching in mind. The core would emphasize those disciplines on which educational practice so heavily rests: psychology, sociology, social psychology, philosophy, history, anthropology, political science, economics. This pre-teaching curriculum would prepare participants for entry into the full and rigorous program of training—centered largely on practice—such as a pre-medical curriculum. Many features of this model currently exist. Large numbers would be attracted and could be accommodated. And even if there is a large attrition at the end—as it is designed that there should be—trainees would have received a sound education that would be useful to them as parents and citizens, and as a base for entering newly developing and expanding education-related and social service occupations outside the school system. This training would prove to be a sound investment both to the individuals and society—whether or not they eventually were licensed and decided to make a career of school teaching.

The second model would enroll a number of persons who have early and mature plans. It would be based on a four-year undergraduate, problem-oriented, *saturated practice* curriculum. It would include extensive field work, simulation, laboratory and real teaching practice from the beginning of year one. The trainees would take little or no formal course work in the traditional programs of the college of education, but be organized into small seminar groups with a tutor experienced in pedagogical research and knowledge. The work should be problem oriented with field experience and liberal arts subject matter content organized and designed to develop the skills, understandings and attitudes of the

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trainees. A general license to begin practice should be granted—perhaps even competency based and tested, state requirements permitting.

A third model is a graduate multi-year practice-based plan. It would involve a range of persons from those who have not heretofore considered teaching to those who have already completed the first model through a core of liberal education, and would be from three to five years in duration. It would take place in a regular school setting alongside an effective in-service education program and would include much observation, tutoring, laboratory and simulation experiences, extensive community participation, considerably more responsible teaching under supervision and solid seminar and university graduate courses with competency based tests as the major avenue for licensure.

The requisite pieces for these three different models are already present. We now have the rare opportunity to put them together. The time is right for a convergence of forces. The so-called shortage of teachers is over. Teacher-training institutions are feeling the pinch. The handwriting is on the wall for most of us. Teacher organizations want to keep the number of new entrants low. School Boards and administrators are anxious to retrain teachers and their staff members. Social forces for relating schools to community needs are running strong. Teachers themselves are becoming more powerfully organized for action. If they, together with federal and state leadership and with support of teacher-training institutions can begin to work constructively—then the next decade can well be one of the most successful in the history of teacher education and administrator preparation. Yes, administrators should also be prepared— follow the same rigorous standards—with demonstrated competency required as the basis for licensure. Then the political clout of educators can be enhanced because the public will have confidence in their processes and their products.

Chapter X

Political Issues in Education: Reflections and Directions

by

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John Zucotti, who was deputy mayor of New York until recently, and at one point was rumored to become the school chancellor in New York, has a favorite story to explain politics in education. Some years back, a school in New York had introduced a new social studies test. When the teacher first took up the book to use it in class she read the first page, which dealt with the city's immigration history. To her horror, she found that on the first page, in reference to the Irish, the book used the term "Mick," and she rushed to the principal and showed him the offending word. The principal looked at it and shook his head and said, "There's a million and a half Irish in the city, and they're all highly organized. Send the book back to the publisher and have it changed." The book came back with the offending word taken out. The teacher turned to the second page and saw the Italians referred to as "Wops." She again rushed to the principal, and the principal took a look at it and he shook his head and said, "There's a million Italians and they are highly organized. Send the book back to the publisher and have it changed." When the book came back the third time, the teacher read on to the next page and was horrified to find the word bastard used on that page. She went back to the principal. The principal looked at it, thought for a minute, and said, "There's millions of bastards but they're not organized. Use the book."

In one of our earlier sessions, John Porter pointed out that history of the Ford Motor Company spanned a stretch of human history that leads from the horse to space vehicles. A scientist I know once told me his grandfather used to ride around in a horse-drawn carriage, but was very much afraid of the automobile. His father, he said, drove a car without any concern but was afraid of flying. The scientist himself was crossing the country monthly by jet without giving it a thought but admitted his fear of space travel. Reflecting for a minute, he said his five-year-old son was dying to travel in space—but was scared to death of horse-drawn carriages.

In a sense, this sequence of phobias also tells us something about the issues and the problems we face in education.

I'm only an editorial writer, and your former colleague, Joe Nyquist, used to define editorial writers as people who rush down from the top of the mountain after the battle is over to shoot the wounded.

My education-watching goes back almost thirty years. In the beginning of my reporting career I was assigned to cover the annual meeting of the Council of Chief State School Officers. When I came back from that meeting, not only did I tell my editors that they wasted their money because I did not have a story, but I told them never to assign me to that group again.

Some thirty years ago, with very rare exceptions, the people—I should say men, because only men in those days held the jobs that you now hold—in the most plain and honest terms were really a very sorry example of education leadership. The progress of change in those three decades is nowhere more noticeable than in the quality of the top leadership of American public education. The issues of this summer institute would never have been discussed at a meeting of Chiefs 30 years ago. That is a sign of real progress.

Ours is a time of transition. Perhaps the most important aspect of this transition is that we have moved, as a country and in education, from a long period of unbroken growth to the beginning of a period of no growth and even decline. Domestically, at this particular time of this period of transition, we are plagued by inflation, which hurts the enterprise in which you all are most interested. Abroad, we are faced by a relocation of power in the world. The era that Henry Luce in one of his more extravagant verbal outbursts in the forties labeled "The American Century" has not lasted quite that long. This assertion does not mean that America is no longer a great power. Indeed, I am convinced that America is still the greatest power in the world. But it does mean that it no longer has the monopoly that it held only a few years ago in determining how the world is to be governed and what is to be done about the world's problems. If you want proof of this fact you need only think of what has been happening to that indicator of American prestige, the dollar, in the past few months. At home, there is, as you know, a new conservatism. So soon after we were concerned, less than a decade ago, with the impact of the New Left, we are now equally concerned with the effects of the New Right.

A Decade of Change

The difference between the sixties and the seventies is clear. You need only look at the behavior, goals, and attitudes of students, of young people, to see how much has changed in less than a decade. Add to that the revolt of the taxpayers that you have heard and talked so much about. After a period of national guilt and a brief era of national atonement—the guilt probably deserved a longer period of atonement than it was accorded—there is a new reluctance to pay for other people's children.

After what you might have labeled a Jeffersonian period, we have returned to a mood that in 1830 was expressed in an editorial in the *National Gazette,* a newspaper then printed in Philadelphia and no longer in existence, which called it "evil" that public funds be expended for the free education of "other people's" children. Much of that spirit is abroad again in America today. If we look a little more closely at the taxpayer's revolt, it seems to me that it is really a middle-class revolt against what the middle class thinks are the "privileged" poor. There is again the demand to do the same for all children—not to provide more for some—without the realization that if you are doing the same for all, you are doing less for those who need more. We need to face this issue in this period of transition.

To give you a very current example of that new trend, a local district in Brooklyn turned down federal funds for youth jobs on the grounds that those funds would have gone, not to their own children, but to the children who are bussed into the district because they were the poorer children. And so the local people said they would rather refuse this money than give it to others. This example is probably the most extreme and the most appalling example of the transition to a new single-minded concern for one's own children, but it is a symptom that clearly must be taken into account in dealing with the new politics of education.

In the same light, collective bargaining takes on a new and different shape when the total pie is no longer growing, or is even shrinking. When you bargain collectively under those circumstances, when you cannot distribute new and additional pieces of a bigger pie, the bargaining must take something away from some. In the context of schools, it takes away from children.

We erred, I think, in shaping teachers' organizations, the teachers' unions, in the image of industrial models rather than with a view to serving a very different, a professional, purpose. For some time NEA tried to create a different kind of teacher organization, but it interpreted that difference as a way of making teachers an adjunct to the administrators—to the management. Then, NEA ran scared and competed with the industrial-type union on its own terms. Now all teacher organizations follow the assembly-line pattern, but it is not particularly suitable to the goals of good education.

To make things worse, the business community is trying to shape the schools to the business model, with the bottom line the ultimate arbiter—just as industrial collective bargaining is the ultimate arbiter in the teacher-union approach. Neither of these models is suited to the improvement of education.

In this period of transition, the political pendulum swings infinitely faster than it used to in the past, and this relative speed makes all the difference. In the past, the swing from traditional, conservative, pedagogical approaches to progressive education and back again happened with sufficient lapse of time to give it, in fact, the effect of periodic adjustments that probably in the long trend of history did more good than harm. Today's extremely rapid swings of the pendulum do the opposite. Instead of adjusting for greater long-term stability, they foster instability. They lead to the situation that Doc Howe described, when he was U.S. Commissioner of Education, as equivalent to planting trees and pulling them up by the roots every six months to see how they are growing.

The crux of any new politics in education ought to be to find ways to make *less* be better rather than worse. That is difficult under any circumstances, and it is particularly difficult in a country that has always considered more the only way to make things better. The fact is, however, that the old patterns and habits simply will not work. We must know more of our history, both of the country and of education, but not become its prisoner.

Take, as an example, bilingual education. The facts of history are quite clear; they cannot be rewritten or revised. Those facts show clearly that the founding fathers viewed the United States as a country with a unified history, with unified traditions, and with a common language. For proof you need only to read Benjamin Franklin and his virtual phobia of foreign-language enclaves. The history of nation-building is clear in any view of the American past. The concept of the melting pot was very much a part of the American tradition, and it was accepted virtually by all. The reason why the melting pot is in disrepute today, and rightly so, is not because the concept was not a good one but because it was used dishonestly. Some people were excluded from the unified country. The melting pot's main failure was that it did not include all persons from all groups at all times.

Moreover, in this process of creating a nation and creating a common language, grave pedagogical errors were made. The history of imposing English on newcomers to the American scene is filled with horrible examples of the forcible stamping out, not only of other languages but other cultural traditions. This course of action was clearly wrong.

Our book, *Growing Up in America,* documents the insensitivity with which that process went forward. As a remedy of that cruel process toward a very desirable end, bilingual education has introduced a pedagogical answer to make it possible to adhere to the common language but make the progress toward it humane and educationally sound. But mastery of the majority language—the national tongue—remains an essential element in making it possible for all children to share in the economic and social benefits of the nation. We can use the schools today, as we have used them in the past, as a means of helping people to advance, to share in the fruits of the economy.

A Political Force

The question that underlies much of the discussion is: Can the schools be a political force rather than a political punching bag, which they so often are. Now I want to state clearly and firmly I am not proposing to go back to the philosophy of George Counts who, as you remember, asked whether schools "dared" to build a new social order. They not only dare not, but they cannot. Anybody who has tried in the past has found out why this is impossible, not only here but in any other country. But even though the schools cannot be a revolutionary force, within the existing social order, they can do much more than they have in the past to influence the politics of this era and particularly the politics that affect them. In the latest of the Serrano cases, the one in New York (Levittown and N.Y. City), the judge ruled that the present system of school finance in New York State violates some children's rights, that the system needs to be corrected within an undefined period of time and that school authorities and political powers must come up with a plan that will protect the rights of those children who live in poorer districts.

I cannot think of a more permissive judicial order. The only non-permissive message in that order is "do something." The immediate political reaction to the order has been to appeal it. They are appealing the order to do something, until eventually some judge will say, "If you won't do it, I will." I suggest that within the existing social order the schools and their political allies can and must do more to influence politics that in turn influence American education, rather than waiting until somebody else forces them to do it.

There is dissatisfaction abroad concerning what the schools are doing. Many of these dissatisfactions are real, and they are expressed not only by revisionist critics of the American schools, but by people of all shades of political commitment. There is dissatisfaction with the quality and the effectiveness of our educational system and dissatisfaction over the relationship between the amount of money that is spent and the return on that expenditure. The "back to basics" movement is real. It springs from a variety of motivations. Some support it only because they think a reduction to the basics is cheaper; but others believe that an emphasis on the basics is educationally more productive. The conclusion differs little from my observations about educational politics and the courts; it is up to the schools to educate, to take the lead and to define the basics.

But the Three R's are not all that is basic! What about an understanding of what is basic to Americans? Is that not part of basic education? What about an understanding of what the public education system means in terms of American history? I have always found it astounding that the enterprise with the largest built-in clientele has so consistently failed in teaching its own graduates anything about these connections, the interrelationships between what we think is special about this country and the concept of public education. How many children are taught in their history lessons about Jefferson's involvement with the future of public education? Dewey is studied only if you were going into a very special branch of education. Only abroad is Dewey considered a philosopher of a particular way of life. We can win the skirmish over literacy—and in my business I certainly would not down-play the importance of reading and writing—but we can win that skirmish and still lose the battle to remain free.

What is basic to freedom? Is that not part of basic education—the Constitution, the laws, the Bill of Rights? Sometime tomorrow morning a reporter is going to jail for appealing to the Constitution, for knowing what the first amendment should guarantee him. I feel strongly about the issue, and particularly strongly about the reporter, because I hired him and I trained him. I shudder to think that some of the things I taught him may be leading him to jail. But where did the people, and where did that judge who wants to imprison him indefinitely until he is ready to violate his duty, learn their basics? That is part of basic education, and it is part of basic educational politics.

Are we doing what must be done to maintain a fluid society—to prevent our society from becoming stratified? We are all for competency. Except for one senator, I know of no one in the country who has ever advocated incompetence or mediocrity as a qualification for high office. But will the new passion for testing lead us into a new era of achievement? We are in a transition to a more conservative view of society, to a new era of pre-sorting, which is the beginning of a stratified society. Ten years ago I had the privilege of serving on the College Entrance Examination Board's Commission on Tests, and we talked then about some of the things that are now being discussed in the move toward competency testing. A few colleagues of mine on the Commission, led by John Hersey, tried to create a sense of what we call symmetry in tests, a symmetry that makes the institutions as responsible as the people who are taking the test. As testing becomes a much more important part of our education discussion, that ought to be kept in mind. Are the tests really telling us only what we ought to know about the pupil? What are they telling us about what we do to teach them? What are we requiring of our students? That is politics too.

The politics of education made us run away from all requirements. A long investigation in the last two years of what made college SAT scores decline has come up with all kinds of guesses and estimates. But I'd like to submit something else as evidence. A few months ago one of our reporters discovered that somewhere in New York there is a huge computer that can spew out, if you push the right button, the courses that are taken by every one of the city's high-school students, and it can compare them over a period of some 15 to 20 years. That computer showed that in the last ten years the number of students who are taking the so-called hard subjects—mathematics, English, writing, science—has declined sharply. Is it really so difficult to understand why test scores decline if students do not take courses that teach what the tests test? Do you really have to look for all kinds of reasons in the family or television if we find we are not requiring students, because of the pressures of politics, to take the courses they need to deal with the problems of the world they face?

Teaching and The Teacher

And what about teaching and the teacher? The tradition in American education has always been to look at the teacher as something like a servant, and apparently that role has not changed very much yet. One crucial aspect of the politics of education is to find the best possible people to do the teaching, to make some of the changes in teacher education that have been suggested, and to do it fast. If it takes five or six years to implement what is to be done, all the teachers we need for the next fifty years will be inadequately trained. It won't do us very much good to change the training system then.

We must get the best possible teachers, train them in the classroom, not away from the classroom, and let them be partners in the process that after all depends on what they do and how much they believe in it. As long as the teachers do not believe in what they are doing, there is nothing that you can do to improve the process of education. Experiments tend to work because they are worked by people who believe in them. The minute they are imposed on teachers who do not believe in them, the gains quickly disappear. Since we have a surplus of teachers, teacher-training institutions should now be able to pick the cream of the crop. In fact, the opposite is true.

Bill Wilson, who was at Amherst and considered the dean of admissions officers during a period of the forties when there was a great shortage of college students, talking about admission to the Ivy League at that time, said the criteria were that "if the body is warm and the check is good, you're in." The shortage of students in our overstaffed institutions, will soon affect teacher-training unless something is done to make less be better, and allow only the best to enter.

As a reporter I used to go from community to community and find that the great problem was where to build the new school and how to fit everybody into the school in double and triple classroom sessions. Less than ten years later I find the only public discussion in most communities is which school to close. There ought to be better ways to deal with our excess schools than to close them. When a company has a plant that is no longer needed in the production process, or if it can find cheaper labor somewhere else, it getes rid of the plant. I do not believe that that is the way to deal with excess real estate in education. One of the challenges to the politicians in education is to make new connections with other parts of our society, to use the excess facilities jointly. We are currently talking about an expansion of health services, particularly for children; we are talking about the problems of the elderly. Excess schools can be model facilities in which to combine education and activities for the retired and the elderly, and health services for both the elderly and children. This alternative is only one possible way of dealing with a transition problem in a way that does not follow slavishly the business pattern of the bottom line.

The most important aspect of all successful politics, however, is leadership. Not public-opinion-poll watching—not mere submission to pressures of the moment, pressures which in a transition period are particularly confusing—but leadership. There is a difference between administration and leadership.

Administration keeps things going, and that is important. We need administrators, but there is a world of difference between the administrator, even the successful administrator, and the leader. The leader does not merely keep things going; the leader must frequently do what is much more difficult—resist pressures, or at least bend them to a course that is not merely politically viable but both politically and socially sound. In the past, the leadership that affected education has very frequently come from non-education forces. The Land Grant Act was supported mainly by land speculators. Educators became beneficiaries almost by default. The GI Bill of Rights was opposed by almost every major university president as a threat to the quality of education, and it was imposed on the schools and the colleges by politicians who wanted to avoid a repetition of post-World War I breadlines. Education has gained enormously from it, but was not the leader. The National Defense Education Act was brought to us by Russian scientists rather than by American educators. It was the fear of Sputnik that allowed us for the first time to use federal funds in a sensible way to improve American education. But the initiative did not come from the politicians of education.

Now, I would be unfair to single out education as the only culprit in the trend toward self-protection rather than leadership. That kind of retreat from the issues is rampant in all American life today including corporate life, where self-protection also frequently becomes more important to people in top positions than striking out in new directions and supporting new ideas. In fact, a recent book showed that this retreat from leadership had also become rampant in the American military, particularly in Vietnam, where the officers' corps was more interested in its own promotion than in the building of a cohesive force with its men.

Some fifteen years ago, John Gardner warned against what he perceived to be an anti-leadership virus, and we are suffering some of the consequences in American politics, in and out of education, today. Now, you are truly a remarkable body of people. I suspect that you could do more than you are doing by joining together. I fully realize the regional differences and the special pressures that are on each one of you. But on some of the larger issues that concern all of you, all of us, and all the children in the country as a whole, you could do more by working together to become a political force in this period of transition. . . . to chart the course of change. In the historical past, this job was done largely by the Elliots and the Conants—spokesmen from the great universities. If you look around the country, you will find a great void in our university leadership. Nobody is about to assume this role. So, remember Dewey and Horace Mann, and become politicians in their tradition as public-school educators.

The American people still believe in education; I am convinced of that. You must help them find a way. You must show them that less can be better. The politics of education can be the affirmation of the American future. If you believe, as I do, that education remains America's last invisible frontier, then the only acceptable political response is to keep that frontier open. All of your politics ought to be aimed at keeping the enterprise strong and sound. That is the last best hope for our children and their children and all those throughout the world who still believe in free human destiny.

REICHENBACH

Chapter XI

Political Issues in Curriculum Reform

by
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The purpose of curriculum planning and development is to provide present and future students with quality learning experiences. Quality usually is defined according to criteria pertaining to responsible citizenship, on one hand, and individual, personal development, on the other. The balance between educating for the welfare of the society and that of the individual depends heavily on prevailing ideologies in the surrounding social system.

The term, "curriculum reform," usually implies change that goes beyond mere refinement of what exists to include replacement of present content, curricular organization or evaluation and, frequently, teaching methods. There are decisions to be made, then, about what is to be learned. Making these decisions involves people, interests and power—the stuff of politics.

Our task[1] has been to identify some of the socio-political issues encountered in making curriculum decisions. They arise both within the formal system of schooling and from the interaction of this system with its cultural context. These issues become increasingly acute with intensification of reform efforts in any direction.

The Scope of The Curriculum Field

Curriculum practice embraces three kinds of phenomena: *substantive, technical-professional* and *political-social.* The substantive addresses ends and means of educational programs: goals, subject matter, materials and the like. The technical-professional pertains to the specialized knowledge and expertise applied to planning, installing and maintaining curricula. The political-social includes all those human processes through which some interests prevail over others and result in this topic or subject rather than that appearing in curricula.[2] While it is possible to separate these three different kinds of phenomena one from another for conceptual and analytical purposes, all three are inextricably interwoven in practice.

Curriculum decision-making goes on in four distinct domains, each with its own problems and actors. The decisions made produce curricula for each domain. Although these curricula interrelate and influence each other, they have a certain independent or autonomous identity, too. There is, then, no single definition of curriculum. There are formal curricula established by state and local school boards, operational curricula proceeding in classes, personal curricula experienced by students, etc. Each warrants a separate definition. Each has substantive, technical-professional, and political-social dimensions. Each presents its unique set of political issues.

The four domains or arenas where all this curriculum activity occurs are the *societal,* and *institutional,* the *instructional* and the *personal* or *experiential.*[3] At the societal level, state legislators pass laws regarding the teaching of the dangers of drug abuse, the inclusion of physical education, or requirements specifying the time to be spent on given subjects. Also at the societal level, local boards decree that reading will be taught to achieve specific behavioral objectives or that certain textbooks are or are not acceptable. And Congress enacts laws pertaining to "mainstreaming" the handicapped and evaluating school programs supported by federal funds. The influence of federal, state and local divisions of the societal domain are clearly visible in almost any school one chooses to visit.

When school staffs decide together to use television broadcasts as a school-wide medium for interesting students in current events, they are involved in curriculum planning at the institutional level. Societal decisions are empty unless and until the results find their way into schools and classrooms. The institutional domain is where it all comes together in the curriculum available to students at any given time.

The instructional domain includes the topics teachers present in the classroom, how they present them and the feelings and attitudes they convey in the process. It is a domain once left very much to the teacher but is now one that almost everybody seeks to influence.

The most neglected domain is the personal—that is, what students experience and how they feel about it. We give lip service to the idea of building curricula around the interests and expressed needs of children and youth but then go about our business of deciding what is best for them without reference to what they might have to say regarding their educational experiences and desires. But this oversight is likely to change during the concluding fifteen years of this century when "the rights of children" increasingly will become a rallying call for educational reform.

There is a fifth domain of curriculum development and reform which I have referred to elsewhere as the ideological or idealistic.[4] In its pure form, it is the domain of ideas. When considered at all, politics is something to be studied not encountered. The ideological differs, then, from the other four domains in being removed and, indeed, protected from the socio-political marketplace, where ideas always are tempered by the interplay of power and compromise.

When you and I conjure up visions of what an ideal high school curriculum might be, we engage in a form of ideological curriculum planning. The curriculum reform projects of the 1960's were conducted largely outside of the other four domains of curriculum development and were predominantly ideaistic in character. But they were not apolitical. Indeed, continuing curriculum activity supported by the National Science Foundation recently attracted Congressional attention because of its implications for federal (societal) intervention in the curricula of local schools. There is a direct link between noteworthy curriculum activity in the domain of ideas, the products of such work, and what goes into school curricula. When ideological curriculum activity remains purely apolitical, it also remains purely impotent.

My interests here are the most critical issues in curriculum reform. Because these are so complex and so varied in character, I shall concentrate on unravelling some of this complexity rather than on making specific recommendations for policy and practice. But, first, some further elaboration of the significance and character of the political dimension is appropriate.

The Political Dimension

The political dimension of curriculum development and reform, though pertinent throughout the history of education, has received little overt scholarly attention. Even today, most university classes in curriculum are more likely to treat issues of behavioral objectives versus nonbehavioral objectives or no objectives than topics of federal, state and local prerogatives. But the latter is more likely to present issues in policy and practice. Indeed, interest in the traditional curricular topics of scope, sequence, integration of subjects and the like has languished throughout the decade.

Interest in the political has been vividly demonstrated in recent attempts of the National Institute of Education to determine its role, if any, in curriculum development. Its Curriculum Development Task Force interviewed key individuals in over sixty professional and lay organizations likely to have strong views about precollegiate educational programs. They were asked to identify major issues, problems and concerns in curriculum development. Of the six overriding themes that emerged, only one (the sixth in frequency and degree of concern) was substantive in character. The first five were almost exclusively political and involved the role and power of various agencies (including those of the respondents) and whose values and interests would prevail.[5] In effect, the issue for almost everyone interviewed was: "Who is to have a piece of the action at all levels of curriculum decision-making?" And the implied answer from each group was: "We are."

Very few of those most concerned about who should make curriculum decisions are interested in rationality to the point of conceding that degree of involvement should vary with the decision to be made. Essentially, the proper questions are: "*Who* should make *what* curriculum decisions?" and "Should I play a greater role in those kinds of decisions rather than these?" Because the idea of possible exclusion from some decisions is abhorrent to almost all the participants, they opt to ignore the question. In effect, they opt for chaos.

The fear that one might have to give up something (maybe something one would not want to participate in anyway) is what upsets the needed balance among substantive, professional-technical and political dimensions in curriculum planning. The political dominates when the professional or substantive should prevail. The preference for confusion and inertia rather than change initiated by others is a major cause of the built-in bureaucratic rigidity on which reform after reform has foundered.

In the matter of determining the school curricula for children and youth, everybody should have a piece of the action. But the proper question is: "What pieces for whom?" Even if one could divorce the process of answering this question from vested interests and the politics surrounding them, the question is not easily answered. In the first place, we are not dealing with a hierarchical system open only at the top or societal level of decision-making. While each domain is to a degree responsible to the others, each also is open to its community or cultural milieu and, therefore, to political intervention.

Figure 1 shows each domain floating free of each of the others as though it were an entity unto itself. But this relationship is not the way

Figure 1. The domains of curriculum decision-making.

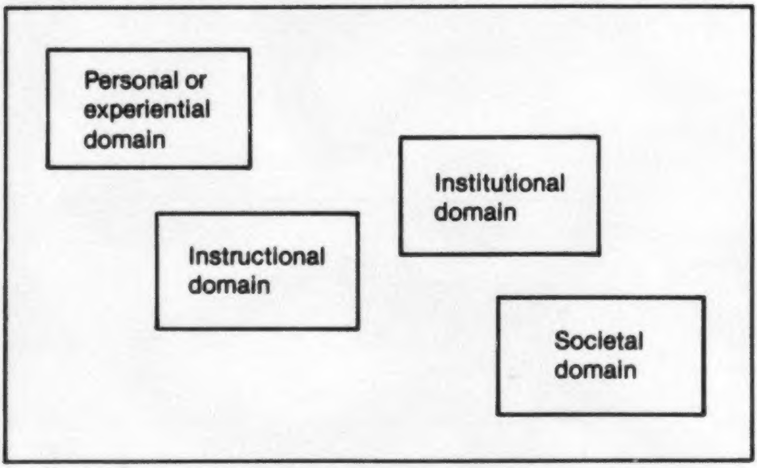
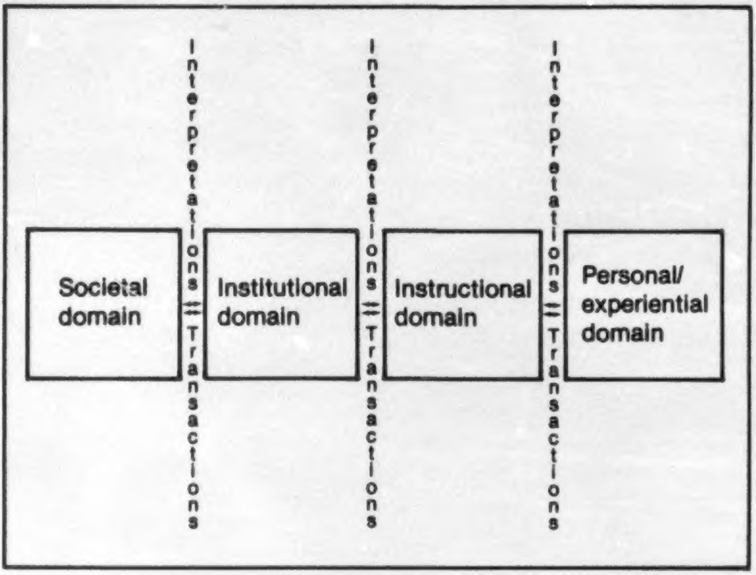


Figure 2. The domains of curriculum and the dominant interactions between domains in the public educational system.

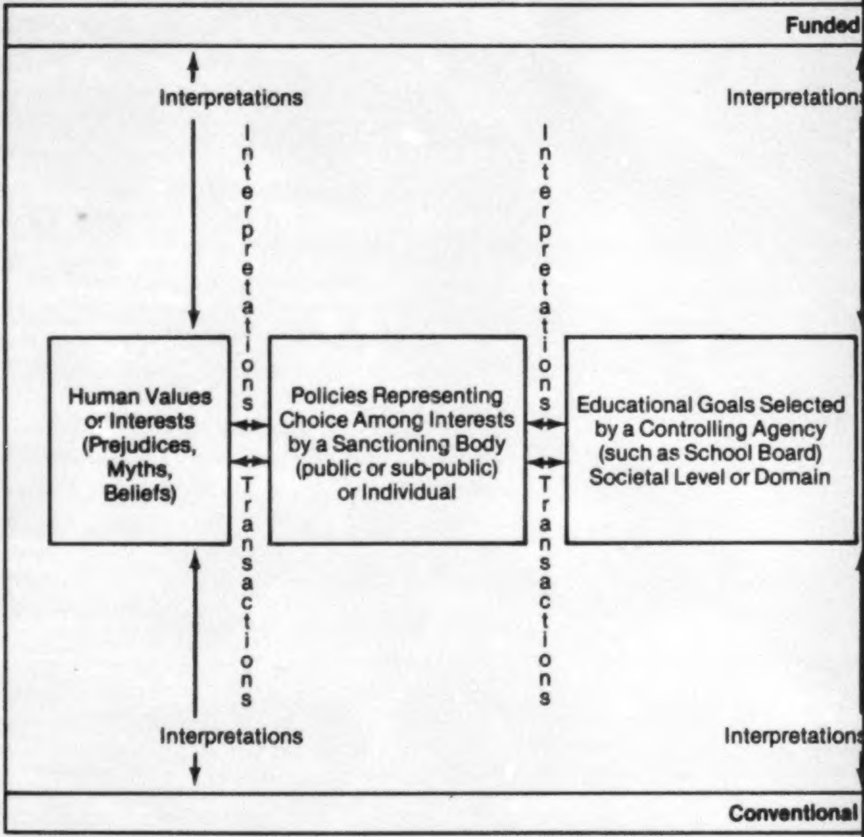

Societal domain
Interpretations ⇌ Transactions
Institutional domain
Interpretations ⇌ Transactions
Instructional domain
Interpretations ⇌ Transactions
Personal/ experiential domain

things are. Each domain is part of a system—in this case, the public educational system. Each domain interacts with the others. But since most of the interacting is between pairs of domains rather than multidimensional, Figure 2 pictures both the dominant pattern of interaction and certain generally assumed but not well articulated lines of authority and responsibility. Whether or not acceptable to all involved, there is a hierarchical character to the system. State and local boards lay down certain requirements which must be interpreted and, within limits, followed by school personnel. These are not always acceptable to school staffs and so there are transactions between the board and teachers. Until relatively recently, these transactions progressed from principals to the superintendent to the board. But, with increasing frequency, organized groups of teachers interact directly with their boards. And so, the areas depicting two-way interactions in Figure 2 (transactions and interpretations) present a "neater" picture than prevails in practice.

Figure 2 is too neat, however, in another respect. Each domain is relatively open to and interacts with virtually all elements of its cultural context. Figure 3 depicts part of this relationship; there are transactions and interpretations in staggering variety. The open character of each domain and the relative vulnerability of pieces of the system are invitations to

Figure 3.

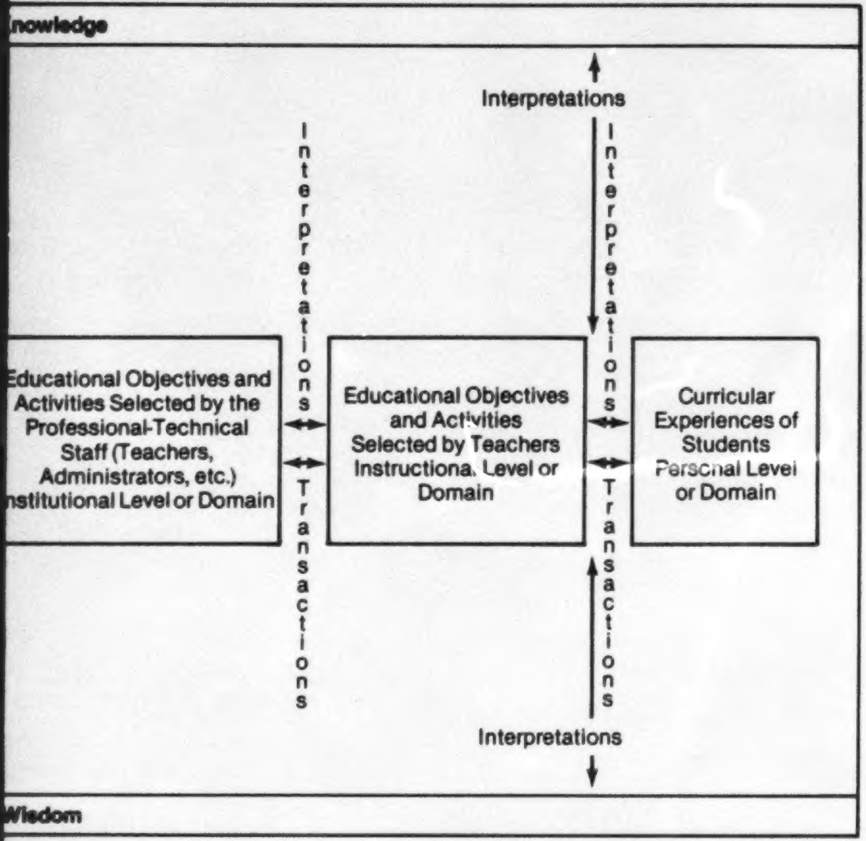
A conceptualization for the practice and study of curriculum.


Funded
Interpretations
Interpretation
Interpretations
Transactions
Interpretations
Transactions
Human Values or Interests (Prejudices, Myths, Beliefs)
Policies Representing Choice Among Interests by a Sanctioning Body (public or sub-public) or Individual
Educational Goals Selected by a Controlling Agency (such as School Board) Societal Level or Domain
Interpretations
Interpretation
Conventional

special interest groups and political activity. And, of course, disagreements between directives from a school's community, for example, and those from other sources of authority and responsibility in the system create tension and conflict.

The interactions between a domain and its milieu are not all political, however. Teachers are free and, indeed, encouraged by the rhetoric of their profession to interact with sources of stimulation, ideas and new pedagogical practices. But this laudatory direction is fraught with elements of potential conflict, too. What teachers learn through keeping up

(Revised from the original on the basis of experience and critical feedback.) See John I. Goodlad, with Maurice N. Richter, Jr., *The Development of a Conceptual System for Dealing with Problems of Curriculum and Instruction*, USOE Cooperative Research Program, Project No. 454, University of California, Los Angeles, 1966.


nowledge
Interpretations
Interpretations
Interpretations
ducational Objectives and Activities Selected by the Professional-Technical Staff (Teachers, Administrators, etc.) nstitutional Level or Domain
Educational Objectives and Activities Selected by Teachers Instructional Level or Domain
Curricular Experiences of Students Personal Level or Domain
Transactions
Transactions
Interpretations
Wisdom

to date frequently conflicts with the views of administrators, school board members and state legislators. There is a built-in conflict between rules designed to regulate the instructional process and the concept of teaching as a profession.

The professional interests of teachers and administrators influence curriculum development inside the system, frequently blocking reform as well as aiding it. But these interests represent a force to be reckoned with outside the formal system as well. University professors serve as consultants to policy-makers, and educators frequently serve on school boards.

And, of course, organized professional associations openly lobby in Washington and state capitols for and against decisions designed to influence all four curriculum domains.

In various ways and through an endless variety of channels, the interests, values, needs and wants of the sanctioning body for schooling—the polity—find their way into school programs. Curricula are molded by an array of forces expressing themselves through votes, individual and group power and compromise. These forces include the needs of the economy, traditional elements in the common culture, the interests of subcultures, client-perceived wants and needs, knowledge production and dissemination, scholarly communities, and the professional concerns of teachers and administrators.[6] Figure 4 is an effort to conceptualize the whole: the domains of decision-making within the system, interactions between them, interactions between domains and their communities, and the surrounding social order from which come the expectations for schooling and the degrees of freedom within which the system must operate.

It becomes clear in studying Figure 4 that educational systems are a far cry from manufacturing systems and factories in their functioning. In the latter, there are feedback systems designed to correct inadequate information and faulty functioning, but the general flow of movement and communication is from top to bottom. The former are open at all levels and between levels; there often is as much, or more, flow of movement between any domain and its context as there is between domains. The factory model is the dominant one still used in seeking to reform and evaluate curricula. But it is inadequate and misleading. We would be better advised to examine models derived from political economy or ecology or a combination of the two in seeking to understand and improve schools.

It is relatively easy at this point to identify the major kinds of political issues and problems embodied in a system which is, on one hand, open to and interactive with its larger socio-political context and, on the other, essentially bureaucratic and interdependent. From these, I shall select just a few illustrative issues and treat them from the perspective of the goal of curriculum development and reform stated at the outset—the provision of quality learning experiences for students.

Illustrative Political Issues

Four different categories can illustrate problems of curriculum reform that are primarily political in origin and character.

1. The politics of academe (internal to the institutional domain of the system). The problem chosen is what I call "the Bermuda Triangle" of curriculum reform—changing the curriculum of a secondary school. I might as readily have chosen a professional school or a four-year college.

2. The politics of instructional reform through legislative fiat (internal to the system and cutting across domains). The problem chosen is that of improving the teaching of reading. I might as readily have chosen the problem of improving the teaching of teachers.

3. The politics of community control and the school's responsiveness to its community (interactive between the institution and its milieu). I deal here with the general issue rather than a specific one.

4. The politics of client-perceived wants and needs in the context of children's access to educational opportunity (interactive between the system and its clients).

Reforming the Secondary School Curriculum

The late Beardslee Ruml once said that university faculties are incapable of reforming undergraduate curricula. The same could be said for the faculties of secondary schools. The late Senator William Benton, when he was vice-president of the University of Chicago, once said that he often thought of his days in Congress, "where they play politics according to rules." Academic politics makes of the secondary-school curriculum a Bermuda Triangle of curriculum reform.

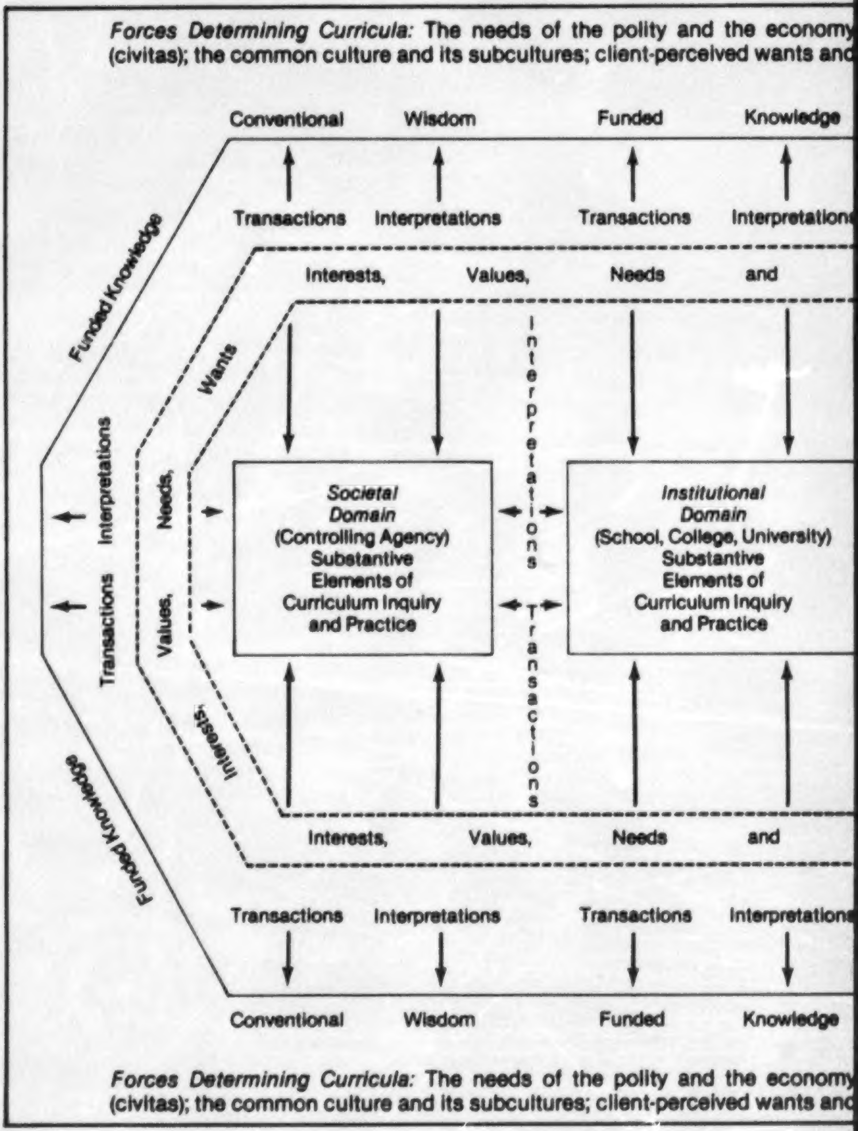
Some of the most exciting ideas for curriculum reform have addressed the secondary school—from the core curriculum to the school-within-a-school concept. But even during the rhetorical hey-day of both, it was difficult to find examples in practice. Both called for collaborative planning and teaching on the part of faculty members, something they find very difficult to do.

Ironically, most faculty members are acutely aware of schoolwide curricular problems that remain chronic year after year, even though discussed and studied at length by committees. In most instances, the difficulty is an inherently political condition—the organizational structure. A structure simultaneously and exclusively serving administrative, policy-making and curricular ends is impotent for curricular reform—and, usually, almost everything except maintaining the status quo. And the departmental organization of the secondary school (or the four-year college) is precisely this multi-functional, impotent structure.

While there may be no good organizational structure for a secondary school or a college, some are better than others, and the better ones interrupt the linear flow of authority with a system of checks and balances. Such arrangements clutter the organizational chart and trouble administrators who see things in orderly, straight lines and cannot stand fluidity. But structure that breaks the flow of authority with responsible, representative policy formulation has some possibility of facilitating curriculum change.

Most secondary schools are organized by departments administered by department heads. This situation is not necessarily bad. The trouble oc-

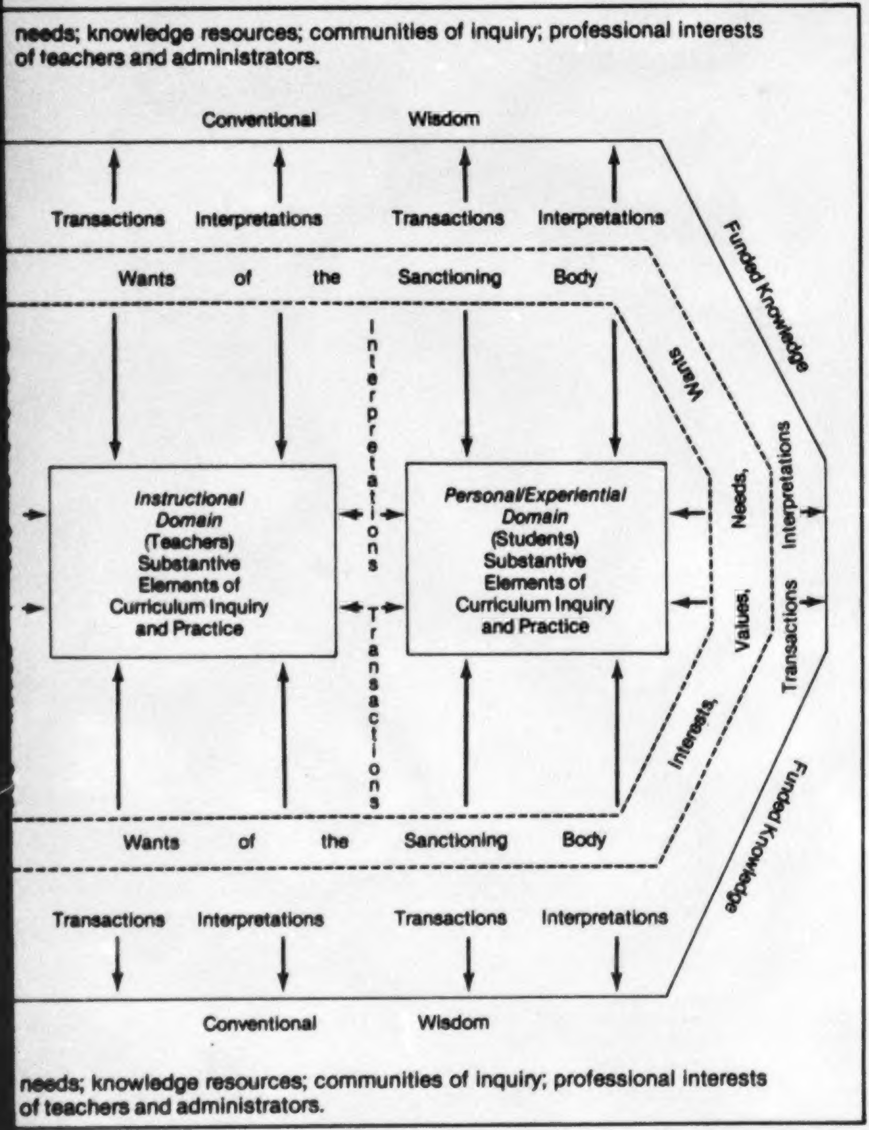
Figure 4. A Conceptualization for Guiding Curriculum Practice and Inquiry.



Forces Determining Curricula: The needs of the polity and the econom (civitas); the common culture and its subcultures; client-perceived wants an

Forces Determining Curricula: The needs of the polity and the econom (civitas); the common culture and its subcultures; client-perceived wants an

(From John I. Goodlad and Associates, *Curriculum Inquiry: The Study of Curriculum Practice*. New York; McGraw-Hill, 1979, Chap. 14.


needs; knowledge resources; communities of inquiry; professional interests of teachers and administrators.
Conventional Wisdom
Transactions
Interpretations
Transactions
Interpretations
Funded Knowledge
Wants of the Sanctioning Body
Interpretations
Wants
Instructional Domain (Teachers) Substantive Elements of Curriculum Inquiry and Practice
Personal/Experiential Domain (Students) Substantive Elements of Curriculum Inquiry and Practice
Needs,
Values,
Interests,
Interpretations
Transactions
Transactions
Funded Knowledge
Wants of the Sanctioning Body
Transactions
Interpretations
Transactions
Interpretations
Conventional Wisdom
needs; knowledge resources; communities of inquiry; professional interests of teachers and administrators.

curs when department heads, usually with the principal and vice-principal, sit as the administrative group, the policy-making body and the curriculum council of the school. Needless to say, the department head's major sense of responsibility is to a constituency, the departmental faculty he or she represents. This constituency, in turn, is deeply committed by tradition and academic preparation to the subject of the department. Departmental considerations tend to over-shadow the welfare of students and the school as a whole. And since reform almost invariably calls for integrating fields of knowledge, opening up new educational opportunities not neatly falling into departments, or dealing with school-wide ills, the changes needed rarely occur.

Secondary schools do not often make bold and exciting curricular changes until matters of school-wide policy, including curricular policy, are separated from the structure described. This situation necessitates the creation of an educational policies council to which faculty members are elected at large. Of course, there will be politicking in these elections; that is what most elections are all about. But leadership can do a great deal to set a tone of service to the institution rather than to a single department.

Such bodies should include students, also elected at large. Faculty members and students present a variety of points of view but should not be regarded as representing a given constituency. The student member of the Board of Regents of the University of California recently expressed herself very clearly on this issue, stating that she did not "represent" the students and that she would not vote on matters pertaining exclusively to students, so as to avoid any possible implication of conflict of interest.

Returning to the matter of departmental structure, it is functionally defensible for department heads to serve as members of the principal's administrative council. And, it is defensible for them to have both administrative and curricular authority and responsibility within the confines of their own departments. But it is not defensible for them to constitute the school's policy-making body *by virtue of the administrative positions to which they have been appointed or elected.* If a school principal sees his or her role as one of creating a democratic workplace in which school-wide curricula are revised and problems solved, he or she would be well advised to create a broad-based policy council while simultaneously reinforcing the intra-department role of department heads and downplaying their school-wide roles. Such an approach is more likely to produce results than is a direct attack on departmental structure and authority.

Let me add, however, that, as Sarason observed, any plan of fundamental educational reform ultimately must deal with the culture of the school.[4] A significant part of the culture of a secondary school is a structure that would seem to be almost diabolically conceived to preserve the *status quo.*

Improving the Teaching of Reading

Sir Alex Clegg, addressing the annual conference of the International Reading Association, expressed some astonishment over the perennially large audiences at reading conferences in the United States. He thought that it was past time for us to have solved the problems, given the attention we have lavished on them. A major part of our difficulty is that we have taken reading out of the instructional domain where it belongs and placed it in the societal one where the Peter Principle runs rampant. And in so doing, we have turned a substantive, professional-technical matter into a largely political one.

The solutions to dozens of substantive problems in education have been obfuscated by turning them into political issues. The knowledge base for our profession is relatively weak; few "for sure" answers are available. And so, much of what should be left to teachers, and specialists who might advise them, is "put up for grabs," to be resolved by administrative fiat or legislative decree.

For an eight-year period in the '60's, bills on how reading was to be taught hovered in the wings of California's state legislature, largely expressing the philosophy of the then-chief superintendent. He chose to make the issue of improved reading instruction a political one. Most teachers and reading specialists, nonetheless, continued to see the issues involved as substantive ones. Many argued for alternative legislation to what was being proposed. What they should have argued for is that reading instruction is not something on which one votes. The merits of one or another method of teaching reading simply are not matters for legislative action—a point of view with which many legislators would disagree. Such a topic does not even belong in the societal domain. It is an instructional matter, to be enlightened by inquiry in the ideological domain, and settled by teachers for and with specific children.

We can argue *ad infinitum* that teachers do not know how to teach reading or, that if they know, they do not work at it hard enough or, that teaching reading is too important to be left to teachers. But to act on the basis of such rhetoric, even if it contains an element of truth, is to turn the problem over to administrators, legislators or parents, while simultaneously reducing teachers' sense of responsibility to it. It is difficult for me to see this procedure as a preferred solution—or for that matter, any solution over any period of time. On the surface, it is an enticing solution, appearing to be infinitely easier than the alternative—a long-term, well-supported effort to assist teachers to employ not the best method, when there is none, but a variety of techniques geared to the nature of both the reading process and learners.

A large part of present-day educational malaise stems from legislative intervention in the specifics of classroom instruction. Ironically, during a period when teacher accountability has been a watchword, much of the authority teachers require if they are to be held responsible and accountable has been written instead into state education codes. Hill found dozens of examples of instructional mandates and restraints in the California code. He then prepared a test of what the code specified and administered it to legislators, school board members, superintendents and teachers in the state. Only the superintendents scored passing marks; both legislators and teachers flunked at a very low level.[8] In actuality, then, much of this legislative dabbling in teaching affects nothing and teachers, in ignorance of instructional requirements, are more free than they think.

Nonetheless, the aura of control over classrooms being exercised in remote places is real in its effects. One surprising concomitant is the inclusion of curricular matters on collective bargaining agendas. Power is mustered to fight power; what should be treated as purely substantive becomes almost purely political. Teachers who demand that specific curricular patterns and instructional procedures be written into collective bargaining agreements are as guilty of restricting the freedoms of their individual colleagues as are legislators who write rules pertaining to classroom instruction. If the unhappy day ever arrives when most of the what and how of teaching and learning is written into state education codes and bargaining agreements, we should give up any pretensions and protestations about teaching being a profession. And the reading problem will still be a problem.

School-Community Interaction

Many political issues surrounding curriculum reform arise out of the interactions between schools and communities. The most important issue is not whether the community should have a voice in the program of its schools but, rather, the definition of community. For several decades, the concept of community has become increasingly parochial; my neighborhood and my community often are synonymous.[9] Translated into education, such a concept implies citizen interest in schooling extending only to "my school."

There are many positive aspects in this trend. Every school of noted accomplishments has enjoyed strong community identification and support. Good schools and parental goodwill go together.

The point is that interest in education beginning and ending with the neighborhood school *is* parochial and implies all the built-in dangers of parochialism. Carried to extreme, it means that local school councils or other bodies select the school principal, approve the appointment of teachers, determine what is and is not taught and impose restraints on teaching practices. The process runs the gamut from endless, nonproductive bickering to little tolerance for countervailing views.

Schooling serves not only to preserve certain traditions but also to create new possibilities and close the gap between expectations and present realities. This principle suggests the desirability of some productive tension between professional-technical considerations and conventional wisdom in which funded knowledge increasingly prevails over local myths and customs in making decisions. To the degree that local views are abnormally parochial, and control over the school is great, this desired tension rarely exists. Forward-looking reform of the curriculum is virtually impossible. The chances of children and youth being broadly educated for a dynamic role in the nation, let alone in an interdependent world, become slim.

The best educational offense to offset the continuing dangers of excessive parochialism is vigorous debate over educational goals and broad-based curricular planning taking place in the societal domain. Whereas legislative and board intervention in instruction can be harmful, state specification of broad educational goals for schools is necessary. Indeed, this control is the constitutional prerogative and responsibility of the states. People tend to seek out and gather together in small communities those they perceive to be of their "own kind." The courts have had to remedy some of the resulting inequalities in educational opportunity. Even some states have been too parochial in such matters, necessitating that their laws be overridden through decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States. Dialogue about the aims of education and the goals of schooling needs to be nationwide and continuing.

When they take seriously the task of setting the socio-political goals for education and schooling, consulting broadly in the process, state legislatures usually come up with a comprehensive list, even when setting themselves the task of defining basic education. Most, perhaps all, states endorse the four sets of goals that have evolved in this country from the seventeenth to the twentieth century: academic (the three R's and beyond), vocational, social and civic, and personal. Continuing, vigorous articulation of these is at once the best offense and the best defense for offsetting the *rigor mortis* of excessive community parochialism.

Just as there must be countervailing elements in the school-community relationship in order to offset parochialism, there must similarly be countervailing elements from domain to domain within the educational system to assure curricular reform. But the curricular organization of state departments of education tends to support and sustain, rather than countervail, the curricular paralysis of secondary schools. They, too, are organized into departments and specialized fiefdoms, each of which fosters activity in its own curriculum but rarely across fields or in new ones. A creative chief state school officer seeking reform of any segment of the system, such as the junior or senior high school, frequently must work around, not with, the departments of his or her own office. I have no words of wisdom to offer with respect to circumventing these reefs of internal structure. Each chief state school officer must have them all well charted to remain effective.

One of the most important contributions to curriculum reform any state superintendent might make today is to get his or her curriculum division personnel to think seriously about the nature and shape of alternative comprehensive, secondary-school curricula. These would not be mandated but would be offered as illustrative, exemplary models of school curricula designed to fulfill the broad array of academic, vocational, social and personal goals to which all states are or should be committed. And such simulated curricula would serve to remind local school councils that their schools have a responsibility to educate children and youth beyond the confines of their own backyards and their own kinds of people.

Who Selects for Children?

Perhaps the most significant and critical issue for future curriculum reform arises out of the question: "Who selects a child's educational program out of the options available?" In effect, after the processes described earlier have worked their way, who decides on the ultimate choice of a student's curriculum? The conventional and rarely challenged answer is: "parents." The challenge to parental authority regarding the education of children has centered almost exclusively on whether parents are required to send their offspring to schools. And their choices have been limited, usually, to the local public school or a private school.

So long as the choices are limited, the question of who chooses is of limited importance. But the choices have been expanding over the years, with respect both to schools and to programs within schools. In the case of desegregation, the courts frequently have provided the degrees of freedom, making it possible for minority children to go to the local school they once had to pass by and alternately, requiring some children to be bussed past schools they once attended. Inside the schools, the role of counselors in making decisions has increased with the proliferation in course offerings and the resulting complexity of choice. In general, students have acquired more control over their options as they progressed through the system. Nonetheless, in the rhetoric of schooling, the parent is the client. This concept will be increasingly challenged in the years ahead.

Public Law 92-142 on education of the handicapped—heralded as a bill of rights for the handicapped—portends some of what lies ahead. It challenges schools and parents to agree on needed "mainstreaming" requirements geared to individual need. Failure of either school or parent to live up to agreements made can and will be a matter for judicial litigation. The authority of both school and parent for the education of children is challenged.

This proposition raises questions to the range of alternatives required and desired, equality of access to available alternatives, and both authority and accountability regarding choice among alternatives. Much of the rhetoric of alternative schooling, especially magnet schools, has emphasized both freedom of choice and quality of educational offering. Mario Fantini conceives "schools of choice," illustrating the concept with the choice among local gasoline stations.[10] But the analogy is a poor one. In spite of the claims made by the major oil companies, the choices between one or another of them are more cosmetic than fundamental. If the choices were among air, water, solar batteries and gasoline, the options would be more distinguishable.

The problem with alternative schools is that of making the options distinguishable as well as assuring that choices made will not foreclose other options such as later admission to college or professional school. Some school systems have been making inflated claims about alternative schools, some not yet even in operation. Might a parent legitimately bring suit if the alternatives described failed to materialize to the satisfaction of the parent? Might a student later bring suit against his parents because their choice of an alternative school restricted his general education to the degree that the college of his choice rejected his application? Or, might a student bring suit against the school district because, in his eyes, his "school of choice" limited his opportunity to pass the proficiency tests for graduation? The fact that these proficiencies are now being spelled out provides the student with the specific criteria he needs for determining the extent of his deficiencies. "If you are going to hold me accountable," the student might well say, "then you must assure me access to the resources required to make me proficient. If you do not provide them, then I shall hold you accountable."

The ultimate in alternatives is the voucher plan—or so go the claims. The options actually available to the student depend on the innovative behavior of those running schools, and the variety of non-traditional educational programs approved for choice. But the most critical question is: "Who gets to spend the vouchers, the parent or the child?"

To the degree that states set very specific behavioral outcomes for students, even if only for minimum competencies to be attained, education is defined for the student and real choice is restricted. These requirements restrain innovation and reduce variability, whatever the rhetoric of differences claimed by competing educational programs. Further, political, moral and legal responsibility for assuring the opportunity to achieve these standards moves toward the legislature, the state board of education and the chief state school officer.

To the extent that states set broad goals and general guidelines for achieving them, moral responsibility for educational choice and attainment tends to move toward the individual. Decisions rest with parent and student. The state steps in to assure equality of access and equity in treatment but does not become surrogate for the child. The state's role becomes one of raising aspirations, providing illustrative models for the attainment of these aspirations and encouraging quality performance on the part of accredited institutions. The message is that individuals have both the legal and political right to education and the moral responsibility to exercise it.

The answer, then, to the question of who chooses a student's curriculum is: "students." The young will require a great deal of guidance, but persons of any age can benefit from counseling regarding educational options and the possible consequences of following one option rather than another. The ability to choose is learned and becomes a goal of education. Where better to begin, in learning to decide, than with making decisions about one's own education? If the goal from the beginning is to learn to take responsibility for one's own education, then the role and responsibility of the state and the parent is to cultivate both the ability to choose wisely, and to provide sound options from which to choose. The issue of who chooses for children finally comes down to the basis of understanding what education is all about.

Some Concluding Generalizations

I offer in closing, then, seven propositions on the politics of curricular reform:

1. The neater the fit between administrative and curricular organization in an educational institution, the less likely that curricular reform will occur. When this fit is perfect in that administrative and curricular structures are one, the institution is virtually frozen. Nothing less than the application of a blow torch from an external source is likely to unfreeze it.
2. The more teacher behavior in the classroom corresponds to detailed directives from above, such as legislative or administrative decrees, the poorer instruction is likely to be—that is, the less it will satisfy sound principles of learning, especially those derived from knowledge of individual differences among students. There is likely to be, then, an inverse relationship between the quantity of detailed legislation on instructional matters and the quality of learning opportunities experienced by students.
3. Similarly, the more the organized teaching profession specifies curricular and instructional requirements for the schools where its members teach, the less creative and innovative teachers are likely to be. There is an inverse relationship between the quantity of specific collective bargaining agreements on curricular matters and the degree to which teaching approaches professional status.
4. The more exclusively parochial the determination of curricular ends and means at the local school-community level, the less likely that the school's program will provide adequately for individual student fulfillment and participation in a global society.
5. There is built-in philosophical incompatibility between specific, detailed requirements for graduation and curricular alternatives and reform. This situation is not the case, however, when requirements for graduation are sharply distinguished from requirements for certification or licensing. If what we want in our society is more educational reform and, at the same time, considerable assurance that persons will possess the minimum competencies for given tasks or jobs, we should move from precise, behavioral specification of graduation requirements to precise definition of licensing requirements.

6. The more specifically states define the educated person and the more they make institutions and individuals accountable for educational performance geared to specific, mandated criteria, the less independent individuals are likely to become in pursuing educational options. Ironically, the more the state holds the individual accountable for achieving state-mandated criteria of accountability, the more the state will be held accountable by individuals not only for specifying the steps to be taken along the road to success but also for success itself.

7. Finally, the hevily political character of curriculum decisions does not necessarily point to a predominantly political role for educators. On the contrary, the growing tendency of educators to be caught up in the heady stuff of politics has been accompanied by a decline in professionalism, to the detriment of curriculum planning.[11] Attention to the substantive is the fulcrum in the socio-political process. this balance point requires the sustained attention of professionals if we are to have sound, progressive curriculum reform.

References

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